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The Foundations of Israel's History

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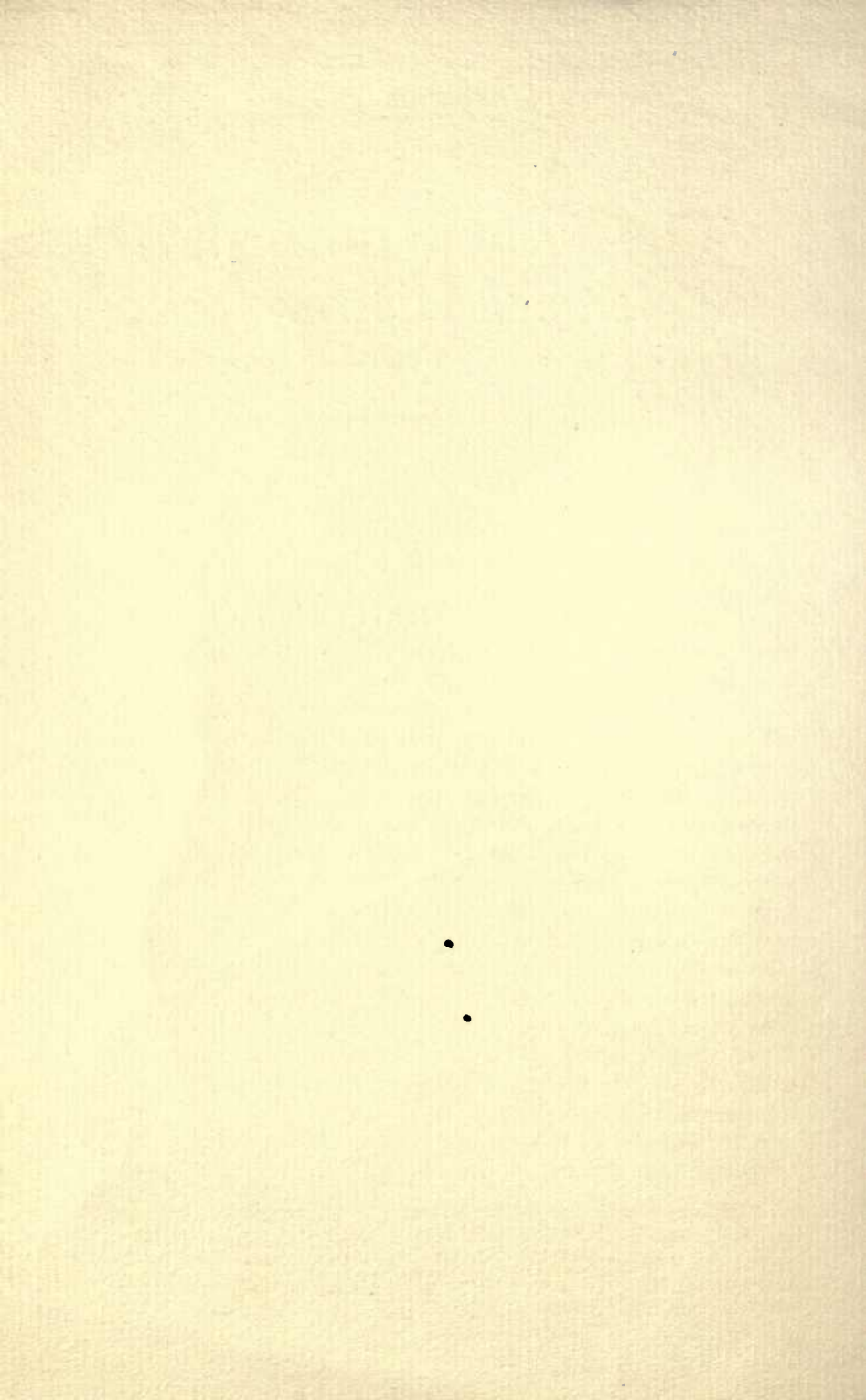


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RABBI JULIAN MORGENSTERN

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THE FOUNDATIONS OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY

RABBI JULIAN MORGENSTERN

I¹

THE CONCEPTION OF REVELATION IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

In all religious knowledge, belief and practice, two realities, altogether separate and distinct, are constantly confused. These two realities are God Himself, and man's little, human, finite knowledge of God. Regularly individuals and creeds have failed to realize, on the one hand, that God Himself is one thing, absolute, supreme, transcendental, unknowable, not human but more than human, and so not to be described by human attributes, measured by human standards, nor adequately comprehended in His true reality by human minds; and on the other hand, that their knowledge of Him, the little they can know of His true and supreme reality, is something vastly different and infinitely less. And they believe, almost without exception, that what they know about God, or think that they know, is all that is to be known, is all of God Himself. And so they believe, too, that whatever others, individuals or creeds, claim to know about God, different from, or more than, their knowledge, must necessarily be wrong, false and heretical. There is very much of this perplexing confusion in our religious belief and practice, and the results are, far too often, ignorance, intolerance, bigotry and strife.

Yet despite all this human disagreement and human intolerance, God Himself is supreme, eternal, unattainable, the

¹ Chapters I and II, virtually constituting the introduction to this paper, were not written until after the Charlevoix convention. They are, accordingly, herewith presented to the Conference for the first time. Their import, however, for the proper approach to, and understanding of, the subject, will be immediately apparent to all.

loving Father of man, the all-wise and all-good controller of human destinies. And from the beginning of his life on earth, man's constant endeavor, unconscious largely, yet none the less earnest and persistent, has been to come close to God, to know His way better and ever better. Like Moses of old, man's cry has ever been, "Let me behold Thy face." But to him, too, the answer has come, "No man may behold My face and live." Yet despite this answer, like Moses again, man has ever persisted, persisted just because of the divine element within him, to know more, and ever more, about God. And just as to Moses, God has, in His infinite love, granted a portion of man's request. Although His face was denied, still He has permitted man to hear His voice, to learn His true name, and to even catch a fleeting glimpse of His back, and, from all this, form some estimate, some dim, vague picture of His true being, His reality and majesty and glory. He has granted to man, as the result of his ceaseless striving upward, to know more and more about Him and to understand more and more of His divine purpose in man's life. And this steadily growing knowledge of God and God's purpose with man, revealed through many sources and in many ways, constitutes man's religion. And the record of the gradual unfolding and growth of this knowledge is the true history of religion.

In all this history of religion, this record of God's revelation of Himself to mankind, Israel has borne, we believe, not merely a leading role, but the leading role. This fact is conceded by almost all the civilized world, even though men may differ as to the actual nature and extent of this leadership. Some there are, who grudgingly admit the fact, yet minimize it as much as possible. And some hold that another leadership was instituted under a new dispensation nineteen hundred years ago. Others, and not a few, rate Israel's leadership more highly, and even recognize that it has not ceased unto the present day.

We Jews ourselves, and particularly we of the Reform wing of Judaism, who believe firmly in Israel's mission unto mankind and in the principle of religious growth and progress along the lines of historical evolution, hold fast to our faith in Israel's leadership in this growing knowledge of God; hold that

it was particularly through Israel that God revealed Himself to mankind; that, in the words of the great, unknown prophet of the exile, God has Himself chosen Israel to be His servant, His witness unto mankind, His light unto all the nations of men; that He has revealed Himself unto Israel, that Israel in turn might spread the knowledge of Him to all mankind. He revealed Himself through Moses and the prophets in successive ages. And the sum total of this revelation of Himself through Israel is the sum total of Israel's knowledge of Him, is Israel's religion, and, as we believe, the basis of the true, ultimate religion of mankind.

But the conception of the actual nature and means of this self-revelation of God to and through Israel has varied greatly in the different periods of Israel's religious unfolding. In the very earliest period, the means and agents were believed to be many and diverse indeed. Auguries, portents, omens, miracles, consultation of spirits and ghosts, these and others were all regarded as media of revelation of the divine will and divine nature. However, as the religious consciousness of the people became more refined, the number of legitimate modes of revelation was gradually reduced to three, the dream and vision, the oracle, and the prophetic word¹. Repeatedly in the Bible, God is represented as revealing Himself and His divine purpose to chosen individuals in dreams or visions.² Moses consults the oracle, according to tradition³, and evolves for the people a body of oracular law, even though represented elsewhere⁴ as speaking to God face to face. Joshua, too, consults the oracle and casts lots to determine the divine will⁵, as do likewise Samuel⁶, Saul⁷, and David⁸.

¹ Cf. I Sam. XXVIII, 6.

² Cf. Gen. XV, 1; XX, 6; XXVIII, 12; XXXVII, 5-10; XL, 8-13; XLI, 1-32; Num. XII, 6; XXIV, 4, 16; Dt. XIII, 2-6.

³ Ex. XVIII, 19-26.

⁴ Ex. XXXIII, 11; Num. XII, 7f.; Dt. XXXIV, 10.

⁵ Josh. VII, 14ff.; XIV, 2; XVff.

⁶ I Sam. X, 20-22 (cf. LXX).

⁷ I Sam. XIV, 18f. (cf. LXX), 38-42 (cf. LXX).

⁸ I Sam. XXIII, 2, 4, 6, 10-12; II Sam. V, 23f.

But above all, in the course of Israel's religious development, prophecy came to be regarded as the peculiar and unique means of God's self-revelation to His people. And, more and more, even consultation of the oracle and the interpretation of dreams and visions were relegated to an inferior position. For prophetic revelation was national in character; it expressed God's will for the entire nation. The prophets saw in themselves the direct agents and mouthpieces of God, speaking to the people the actual words which God had placed upon their tongues. But of even more significance than these actual words of God, they saw God's hand in all things, in the events of their own personal lives¹, and in all the incidents of Israel's history. They came to conceive of God as the all-wise and all-good controller of human destiny. Therefore in all the events of history, and particularly of Israel's history, they saw His power and read His divine purpose. Other peoples and other religious teachers found their evidences of the existence of God and the manifestations of His power and rule in nature, in the beauty of the flowers, the majesty of the heaven, the power of the storm, the awfulness of the flood. The prophets, and through them all Israel, too, saw all this as clearly as any others. But even more, they saw God, not merely in nature; they saw God, too, in the events of human history; saw Him guiding the destinies of men and nations aright, bringing good out of the chaos of human purpose, human conduct and human vanity, changing the temporary evil of man's deeds into permanent good and blessing², bringing mankind ever forward, half unconsciously, along that difficult, slow, up-hill course, that mankind has trodden since the beginning, that we are treading still today, despite wars and barbarisms and relapses in civilization, and that mankind must continue to tread, we believe, until the end of time and history

¹ Thus Hosea interpreted his own relations with his harlot wife as ordained by God in order to graphically illustrate Israel's faithlessness, for himself and the people. And he gave to his children, as did Isaiah after him, names symbolic of God's relation and purpose with Israel.

² Compare the thought underlying the words of Joseph to his brothers, "Ye planned evil against me, but God devised it for good, in order to preserve the life of a mighty people." (Gen. L, 20.)

and life, the course of progress and enlightenment and knowledge, the knowledge of God Himself and of His purpose with man on earth.

In Israel's history, in particular, the prophets saw the evidences of God's love and purpose and guidance. It was Israel alone whom God had known of all peoples¹, whom He had found like grapes in the wilderness², His first-born son³, whom He had taken in His arms, and taught to walk, and whose bruises He had healed⁴, whom He had taken unto Himself, that they might be unto Him for a people and He be unto them for their God⁵. And every event in Israel's history, they held, happened in accordance with God's will and purpose for Israel, for reward and blessing, or chastisement and correction, or divine guidance. Every event of history was purposed by God, though not at all in the way of blind fatalism. Man was not the powerless puppet, dancing as the deity pulled the strings; rather, he was the majestic creature, but little lower than the angels, endowed by God with knowledge and free will, yet subject to God's laws and amenable to correction and even punishment, when the exercise of this free will led contrary to God's plan of good. Everything in history, they believed, was purposed by God. In the words of Amos⁶, "Do two walk together, without having agreed? Doth the lion roar in the forest, when there is no prey? Doth the young lion utter forth his voice from his den, without having taken something? Doth a bird fall into a snare on the ground, without the trap having been set? Doth a snare spring up from the ground, without catching something? Can the trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not tremble? Can evil befall a city, and the Lord not have caused it? Verily, the Lord God doeth nothing at all, without having revealed His secret purpose unto His servants, the prophets. The lion roareth; who can but fear? The Lord God hath spoken; who can but prophesy?" Can anything happen without cause; and can any cause exert itself except to its full effect? And the

¹ Amos III, 2.

³ Ex. IV, 22.

² Hos. IX, 10.

⁴ Hos. XI, 3.

⁵ Ex. VI, 7; Lev. XXVI, 12; Dt. XXVI, 17; XXIX, 12.

⁶ Amos III, 3-8.

ultimate cause of all events of history is God himself; and the effects of His divine purpose are just these events of history. And His secret plan, His definite purpose for men and nations and mankind, He reveals to His messengers, the prophets, that they, in turn, may reveal it to Israel and to mankind. The prophets were, above all, the interpreters of history, and particularly of Israel's history, reading God's divine plan there aright, and proclaiming therefrom His purpose, His message, and His life to man.

We can readily understand, therefore, the significant fact, oft commented upon, that the great prophets appeared always at the important crises, national and religious. They were all the children of their own times, called forth by its needs and spiritual dangers. And, in the name of the God of Israel, they interpreted to the people these needs and dangers and the real significance of the passing events of history. In the various calamities that had befallen, and were befalling, Israel, they saw the signs of Israel's faithlessness and of God's indignation and divine punishment. Amos and Hosea interpreted the impending downfall of the northern kingdom as evidence of the people's hopeless corruption and incapability of repentance and regeneration. They saw in Assyria the rod of God's anger, with which He must smite the sinful nation. Isaiah counselled a policy of national steadfastness and defense, the watchword of which was absolute faith in God's protecting power, and entangling alliances with no foreign nations. Jeremiah, too, saw in Nebuchadrezzar the instrument of God's will with Israel, and urged, among other things, peaceful settlement and development of economic life in the land of exile. And finally, the great, unknown prophet discerned in all Israel's sin and suffering and exile merely the divine purification and preparation for its great mission as God's witness unto mankind. The prophets were, in a sense, the makers of Israel's history, particularly Israel's religious history and thought. But equally, or to an even greater degree, they were the children of Israel's history, called to their great, prophetic mission by the needs, national and spiritual, of their own times. And their message consisted primarily in interpreting to Israel, from the standpoint of the God of history,

all the significant events of its national life, in order that Israel might thereby realize the better God's purpose with it, and live more true to this purpose. And through this interpretation of Israel's history, as the wise and purposed work of God, steadily they fulfilled their inspired task of proclaiming likewise to God's people their transgressions and to the house of Jacob their sins¹.

But not merely the passing events of their own day did they interpret thus. Time and again they reinforced their message by reference to the great events and heroes of Israel's past. And through their interpretation these took on new, larger and more spiritual significance. Particularly was this the case with the traditions of the patriarchs, especially Jacob², and of the exodus from Egypt. One prophet after another dwelt upon this last incident in particular and found therein new evidence of God's providence and love and divine selection of Israel³. According to this prophetic interpretation, it was then that God first manifested His all-embracing love for Israel and took Israel into covenant relation with Himself. And so, according to this new, spiritual interpretation of the historic event, the exodus from Egypt came gradually to be looked upon as marking the beginning of both the national and religious existence of Israel.

But not only in the prophetic books themselves, can we discern the prophet's interpretation of Israel's history. We know now that practically all the historical portions of the Bible, and particularly the larger part of the Torah, are the work of prophetic writers, interpreting the ancient, traditional history of Israel from this prophetic standpoint of divine purpose and providence. A typical instance is found in the statement⁴, that when Pharaoh sent Israel forth from Egypt, God did not lead them by the road through the land of the Philistines, although this was the shortest route, for He feared that when the danger of battle would be imminent, they might become frightened and change their minds and return to Egypt; so He led the people around the long way by the Red Sea and

¹ Is. LVIII, 1.

² Cf. Hos. XII, 4-5.

³ Is. XI, 16; Jer. II, 6; VII, 22-25; XI, 4; Ezek. XX, 5-10; Hos. II, 17; IX, 3; XI, 1; XII, 10; XIII, 4; Amos II, 10; III, 1; Mic. VI, 4.

⁴ Ex. XIV, 17f.

through the wilderness for forty years. Practically all the many narratives of the Pentateuch are told from this unmistakably prophetic standpoint, and with this unmistakably prophetic purpose, of pointing, with the traditions of Israel's past history, the lesson of God's peculiar relation to, and love for, Israel, and Israel's peculiar obligation to God. It is clear that these prophetic writers have taken many old traditions and intentionally recast and reinterpreted them to further this purpose. Their object in all this was not to determine how much of historic truth lay at the bottom of all these traditions, nor to record the events of Israel's history as they had actually transpired. They were not objective historians; in fact, they were not historians at all, in the strict meaning of the word. Rather, they were didactic, historical writers; and their purpose was to enforce their spiritual message by interpreting the facts of Israel's ancient history, and its old traditions, legends and myths, from their prophetic standpoint; to read their message into these traditions and into the record of Israel's history, that Israel, in turn, might read the message therefrom, and gather, with redoubled strength and conviction, the lesson of its history as proclaimed by the prophets, the lesson of God's selection and guidance of, and purpose with, Israel, and of Israel's obligation of faith in, and duty to, God.

In accordance with this unvarying purpose, it was unavoidable that, in recording the ancient history, traditions and legends, they took many and considerable liberties with historical accuracy. They could have no hesitation in recasting some ancient tradition to fit their purpose. Nor could they record all the ancient traditions and legends that did not readily accord with this purpose. Here and there we have just a hint at some tradition or legend, which, for one reason or another, these prophetic writers did not see fit to relate in full¹. And we can readily understand that very many of Israel's most ancient traditions and legends they saw no reason to record, and so these have been lost completely. Other traditions they naturally retold and enlarged upon, until, in their present form, they must be far from their original, and can contain but little of actual,

¹ Cf. Gen. VI, 1-4; X, 9f.; XXXII, 2f.

objective, historical truth. Thus the very stories of the exodus and of Israel's covenant with God, and the many Biblical traditions about Moses, are greatly expanded from their original pre-prophetic, historical form¹. In many cases it is not a difficult task for the capable historian to strip off all the prophetic accretion and get at the real historical facts beneath. Thus we know today that Moses was really the hero who led one tribe, most probably Judah², out from Egypt, back into the wilderness, its original nomad abode; and there, acting as its tribal priest and interpreter of the oracle, he brought the tribe into covenant relation with a desert god, thought to dwell upon some certain, solitary peak in the wilderness, and, in the name of this new god, and as revealed by him, evolved for the tribe a body of ritual and ethical law, which in time became the basis of the religion of Israel³. In this sense Moses is a real, historical character, actually the law-giver and ultimate founder of Israel's religion. And the exodus is an actual, historical event, and marks, in a way, the beginning of Israel's national and religious life. But at the hands of successive prophets and prophetic writers, the original narratives of Moses and the exodus and the giving of the law have been recast and expanded into their present form in the Pentateuch. Moses has ceased to be the simple tribal priest and enactor of the earliest tribal laws. He has become the great national hero, the medium of the revelation of the whole body of national law. And even though much of this, it is stated, was intended to become effective only at a day much later than Moses, it is all represented as emanating directly from God and revealed through Moses at

¹ Cf. Montefiore, *Outlines of Liberal Judaism*, 188f.

² Or, possibly, Judah and Simeon. Some scholars, mistakenly, we believe, are inclined to believe this to have been the Joseph tribes, *i. e.*, Ephraim and Manasseh.

³ Apparently, too, Moses effected some sort of federation between Judah, or Judah and Simeon, on the one hand, and the Qenites, with whom he himself was personally related by marriage, and possibly also the Qalebites, the Qenizzites and other nomadic tribes of the desert south of Palestine and bordering upon Egypt. In this sense Moses was also the first leader in that movement toward tribal federation that eventually culminated in the evolution of the nation, Israel.

the very beginning of Israel's national existence. And Moses has come, furthermore, to be represented by these prophetic writers, and most naturally, as the supreme type of prophet, who, unlike and superior to all other prophets, could commune with God, not merely in dreams and visions, but face to face, just as one man would speak with another¹. There is a vast difference between this prophetic, literary, Pentateuchal Moses, the supreme prophet, and the actual, historical Moses, the tribal priest, leader and interpreter of the oracle in the wilderness. The prophetic purpose, and the prophetic interpretation of history, and the prophetic enlargement of the original traditions are easily discernible here. And the competent Biblical student must learn to so read his Bible as to appreciate and distinguish between the actual facts of history at the bottom of all the recorded narratives and the prophetic enlargement and interpretation that have been placed upon these facts in their present Biblical form.

Such were the prophet's interpretation of Israel's history and the prophet's conception of revelation and of his function as an agent of this revelation. Each prophet, convinced of his divine call in the most literal sense, felt himself to be, and actually was, a single link in the great chain of God's self-revelation to His people. He believed himself and his words to be merely the instruments of this divine self-revelation. But more important than the single personality of any one prophet was the content of his message; and more important than the combined personalities of all the prophets was the sum total of their message, the basis and content and purpose, as they believed, of all revelation, Israel's actual history, past, present and future.

During and after the Babylonian captivity, the old spirit of prophetism, which had come, with Deutero-Isaiah, to transcend the limitations of national life and national religion, and attained to a wider and loftier universalism in its conception of God and Israel and Israel's role in the divine scheme of human existence, slowly gave way to the new spirit of priesthood, ritualism and legalism. This was, in a sense, distinctly nationalistic, or better, national-religious; it represented a more or less

¹ Ex. XXXIII, 11; Num. XIV, 7f.; Dt. XXXIV, 10-12.

conscious reaction and protest against prophetic universalism, and reaffirmed in new and even stronger terms the old national-religious doctrine of the peculiar, unique relation of God with Israel. Israel alone was His people, alone was holy unto Him, and He alone was Israel's God; in relation to Israel He, too, was holy. The term "holy," *qadosh*, gradually acquired a new and more technical connotation; it came to mean not merely "morally and spiritually perfect," as used by Isaiah in reference to God Himself¹; nor did it retain even its earlier technical sense, "peculiarly sacred to a deity and hence taboo for mortals."² It was now applied to everything that pertained to this sanctity, the peculiar ritualistic and ethical and spiritual laws and restrictions by which the "holiness" obtaining between God and Israel was preserved and strengthened³. It was the old, national religion, revived, intensified and centralized, and, it must be recognized, purified and spiritualized also.

But it meant the end of prophecy. For, beginning with Amos, prophecy had been gradually outgrowing the old, national religion; had been evolving the universal conception of the all-Fatherhood of God and of human brotherhood and of the divine selection of Israel for a definite purpose and mission unto mankind. Finally, in Babylon, the people found itself completely detached from its native soil, saw its national life and institutions and traditions seemingly dead, realized that it was living among strangers, and, after the first suffering and grief of exile had worn off, was even happy and prosperous.

¹ Is. VI, 3.

² Cf. below pp. 269f.

³ Note the significant manner in which laws, ethical and spiritual in character, are grouped with laws unmistakably and solely ritualistic in Lev. XIX, and in fact throughout the entire Holiness Code (Lev. XVII-XXVI in the main). The purpose of both kinds of law is clearly stated to be to safeguard this holiness relation between God and Israel. The watchword of this new movement was, "Holy shall ye be, for I, Jahwe, your God, am holy" (Lev. XIX, 1). Here "holy" is used in the new, technical, semi-spiritual and semi-ritualistic sense just indicated. Repeatedly, too, the holiness command is enforced with the all-compelling thought, "I am Jahwe" (Lev. XIX, 12, 14, 16, 18 and *passim*), or "I am Jahwe, *your* God" (Lev. XVIII, 30; XIX, 3, 4, 10, 25 and *passim*), or even, "I am Jahwe, who doth make you holy," *i. e.*, holy unto Himself, His peculiar property (Lev. XX, 8; XXI, 8, 15, 23; XXII, 9, 16).

Yet during all this time it had retained its faith in its God, the God of its fathers; its old God, yet also its new God, who seemed no longer bound by the geographical limits of the land of Palestine or the political limits of the nation Israel; who seemed the God also, though perhaps not to quite the same degree nor in exactly the same way, of the nations among whom they lived and with whom they associated and did business. The conviction became strong on the part of some that this very exile from the native land, and the death of the nation, had been really purposed by God. And prophetic universalism blossomed forth during and immediately after the Babylonian captivity into definite and clear expression in the words of Deutero-Isaiah, the very culmination and flower, we believe, of prophetic inspiration and prophetic activity.

But while this spirit of universalism was thus developing, and continued to develop in Palestine in small and select circles even after the captivity, as the books of Ruth and Jonah prove, none the less, the reaction against the captivity and against the spirit of universalism had begun in Babylon long before the advent of Deutero-Isaiah, had begun in fact almost with the very commencement of the captivity. Ezekiel was the father of this reaction. It based itself upon the confident hope, already voiced by Jeremiah¹, at least according to popular interpretation, that the captivity would not mark the end; that the nation would once more be restored, the Temple rebuilt, and the national life and national worship revived. Once more, though in a stricter and more literal, though at the same time also more spiritual, sense, Israel would be God's peculiar people and He their peculiar God, Israel "holy" unto Him and He "holy" unto them. And this unique and intimate relationship of "holiness" must be safeguarded by every means possible, not only by ethical living, as enjoined by the earlier prophets, but also by more constant and intense and punctilious worship and ritualism, and, if necessary, even by such extreme measures as the compulsory divorce of non-Jewish wives². In consequence this new national-religious movement, in glaring contrast to the old prophecy, accentuated the ritual side of the

¹ Jer. XXV, 11ff.

² Cf. Ezra IX-X.

religion more and ever more. The tendency of prophecy had been away from ritualism. Amos, Isaiah, Micah and Jeremiah had inveighed against it in the most scathing terms¹. Ezekiel, on the other hand, the founder of the new movement, himself a priest, was the first of the ritualist, priestly prophets. After him came Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, spiritual prophets in a sense, yet with the new priestly and ritualistic spiritualism. The old, truer and more inspired prophecy, after reaching its climax in Deutero-Isaiah, came to a natural end. Here and there we find an occasional utterance in the old spirit, and later apocalyptic literature, too, now and then reveals something thereof. But true prophecy itself was dead; it had too much outgrown the narrowing influences of national life and national religion, to live on in the new atmosphere. The spirit of the people at large, even in Babylon, was intensely ritualistic. Not only the Book of Ezekiel and the Holiness Code were composed in Babylon, but the greater part of the Priestly Code² as well. The prophet ceased to be the foremost factor in the interpretation and development of the religious life. The priest now completely took his place as the religious leader and expounder of the divine nature and the divine will. And Israel itself turned from the role of a prophet-people with a divine world-message, such as Deutero-Isaiah had conceived for it, to that of a priest-people, charged with the duty of punctiliously worshipping its God and jealously and scrupulously living the life He had ordained for it alone.³

¹ Amos V, 21-25; Is. I, 10-17 (cf. LVIII, 1-12); Jer. VII, 1-10; Mic. 6-8.

² In addition to a few chapters in Genesis and in the last half of Numbers, and the very close of Deuteronomy, found for the most part in Ex. XXIV, 15-XXXI; XXXV-XL; Leviticus (complete); Num. I-X, 28. The Holiness Code is incorporated in the Priestly Code. Cf. Carpenter and Harford, *The Composition of the Hexateuch*, 228-300 and index.

³ In passing, an interesting and significant thought may be presented. As the result of perfectly natural and easily comprehended religious evolution, Israel had come to a curious division of opinion in regard to the interpretation of its religion and its history. On the one hand, as has been pointed out, a universalistic conception of God and religion had developed from Amos to Deutero-Isaiah, culminating in the doctrine of the all-fatherhood of God and of human brotherhood and of the mission of Israel. In its expression by

It was but natural that with this spiritual death of prophecy, and the development of the new, priestly spirit and ritualistic in-

Deutero-Isaiah, himself probably living in Palestine, this conception was coupled with the thought of the return of Israel to its fatherland, and, presumably, the consequent re-establishment of the nation. But this return and this national reconstruction were only means to the greater end of Israel's role in the prophet's scheme of universalism; Israel was to be, above all, the light unto the nations. Nowhere does the prophet attempt any picture of the reconstructed national life, of the administration of the new government, or of the blessings and joys of the new national independence. The universalistic ideal is the great goal; Israel is to live, not apart, by and for itself, and holy to its God alone, but among and for the sake of the nations.

Certainly, too, there were some, perhaps many, who shared the prophet's dream of universalism, but went by no means as far in their conception of, and longing for, the return to Palestine and the re-building of the nation. Undoubtedly to many, particularly in Babylon, happy and prosperous in the land of their adoption, the return must have seemed an altogether unessential detail of the universalistic program. How could they preach universalism or how serve its cause better, than when living among strangers in a strange land, yet feeling and showing themselves altogether one, truly brothers, with the people among whom they were living? Since this doctrine of universalism must have accorded completely with the life and life-philosophy of very many Jews, born in Babylon, and happy and prosperous there, it offers the simplest and most natural explanation of that otherwise strange fact that, when the opportunity to return to Palestine did come and was repeatedly renewed, so few availed themselves thereof. It was, undoubtedly, not merely because the majority of the Babylonian Jews were too materialistically inclined to exchange their prosperity in Babylon for the hardships of removal to, and sojourn in Palestine. Far more likely, it was just because very many, possibly the great majority, approved of this prophetic universalism and felt that they could best champion this cause, this conception and interpretation of Judaism, in Babylon itself.

Yet these Jews had not compromised their Judaism nor departed from its teachings in the least. On the contrary, Deutero-Isaiah had not at all given birth to an absolutely new thought in his doctrine of universalism. Rather, this doctrine had been developing slowly but surely in the religious life and experience and thought of the people; it was the natural and necessary culmination of the evolution of prophetic religion. And the culmination at just this moment was largely due to the conditions of life in Babylon, away from the fatherland and all national influences. Although Deutero-Isaiah was the one who formulated the subconscious thought and philosophy in words, and was its foremost expounder and champion, none the less he was conspicuously the child of his times, just as were the other prophets in their days. Had not the nation fallen and Israel been led away to Babylon, we may be sure that neither Deutero-Isaiah nor any other prophet would have con-

terpretation of religion, a new and altogether different conception of revelation should gradually come into existence. The Torah

ceived of this doctrine. But not only he, but all who held this same view and interpreted Judaism in the same way, and in fact the whole movement itself, were the products of their times and conditions. And their attitude was not at all materialistic nor time-serving. They had a real, natural and well worked out philosophy of God and life and religion in general, and Judaism in particular, in this doctrine of divine fatherhood and human brotherhood and Israel's mission.

Nor was theirs at all a philosophy or policy of assimilation. Their conception of universalism was founded, not upon the principle of obliteration of national, racial, cultural or even religious differences, but solely upon the principle of world-wide recognition of the principles of divine fatherhood and human brotherhood and common worship of the one, true God. That theirs was no program of assimilation is proved by the fact that they insisted upon a peculiar, distinctive and separative role for Israel in this great scheme of universalism; Israel could discharge its God-imposed mission only by remaining distinctly Israel, and thus raising all the nations to its height of knowledge and belief, not by submerging and extinguishing itself among the nations. And it is proved even more concretely by the fact that just in Babylon Israel has ever, even unto the present day, maintained its separate existence, did not assimilate with the nations and disappear, but actually continued as the real stronghold of Jewish spiritual life and doctrine, even in contradistinction to Palestine, for over fifteen hundred years, until the tide of civilization moved westward, not to Palestine, but to northern Africa and Europe. We know too little of the life and history of these Babylonian Jews to adequately measure all the influences that determined the course of evolution of Judaism and, in time, produced a clear-cut and separative orthodoxy and ritualism among them. None the less we must recognize this principle of universalism at work among them, and that the product thereof was much that was spiritual and at the same time distinctly Jewish.

On the other hand, we must realize that the growing longing on the part of many for the restored and purified nation, and the development of the doctrine of holiness, "peculiarly sacred to God," was an equally natural and comprehensible outcome of the evolution of the religion. When permission was given to return to Palestine, the people had perforce to make choice of their future course; had to declare concretely their adherence to one or the other interpretation of Judaism and of the function of the Jewish people, whether chosen by God to be His witnesses to mankind, equally God's children, or chosen to be His only servants and worshippers, while He, in turn, would be their own, peculiar deity. That the majority, apparently, chose the course of universalism, is not surprising. It was the easier course and demanded less sacrifice. Yet, for all this, it was not the less idealistic and sublime. But equally, too, the sublimity of the faith and idealism of the returning exiles can not be overestimated. Probably, too, many believed in the doctrine of

was completed by the incorporation of the older, prophetic, didactic-historical writings with the new Priestly Code. The resultant

nationalism and national religion and holiness, but for one reason or another did not enroll among the returning exiles. Their reasons must have been too manifold to even conjecture. Not unlikely their influence upon the subsequent evolution of Babylonian Judaism was considerable.

It is interesting and significant to realize that an almost parallel condition obtains in Judaism to-day. It dates from that moment in the last century when the ghetto walls of Europe were thrown down and the Jew became a citizen, theoretically at least, of the nation in which he lived. Theoretically he was free to determine his course of conduct and the future evolution of his Jewish life and religion. In the ghetto, under repressive and oppressive laws he had no such freedom; he was compelled to live within himself, to confine himself to the study of his own law and the practice of his religion. That, in a way, he was content, we know. But now that a new world and new opportunities were suddenly opened, and he was bidden to choose, he found himself, theoretically, obliged to decide between two, or possibly three, alternatives. He might accept the proffered invitation and become a citizen; just because of his manifold, centuries-long experience, a kind of cosmopolite and universalist, even though at the same time a citizen of his own nation in the truest and highest sense. Or he might reject the invitation, and, instead, continue of his own free will the life that he had been compelled, by external forces, to live all these years. Or finally, he might step forth from his ghetto, but refuse to become a citizen of the nation in which he lived, and instead, seek to re-establish the old Jewish nation in Palestine, just as the exiles had done twenty-four hundred years before. What though the task was infinitely more difficult than then, and seemed to very many almost futile; none the less it was, theoretically, a legitimate alternative.

Practically the matter worked itself out very simply. Naturally the majority, enthused by the beauty of the ideal of freedom and universal brotherhood, so strongly emphasized in the early half of the nineteenth century, accepted the invitation wholeheartedly and unquestioningly, rejoiced in their new citizenship and in their opportunities for usefulness, knowledge and culture, and made the most thereof. The result has been, to make a long story short, our Reform Judaism. Its position, in one sense, is largely that of Deutero-Isaiah and those who shared his views, a lofty conception of the doctrine of universalism and of Israel's peculiar role, not as assimilated, but as distinct and separate, God's witnesses unto mankind.

Others, largely unconsciously, and largely, too, through force of circumstance, because opportunities for freedom were not fully presented, and repressive restrictions were not completely removed, or were speedily renewed, chose, or were forced to choose, to continue their former existence, with only slight modification.

The possibility of a third choice occurred at first to very few. Only slowly, as the glamor of freedom faded somewhat, and, also, as, after the

work, our present Pentateuch, soon acquired a peculiar sanctity and authority in Judaism. From then on the Law became the guide of all Jewish life and worship. Day by day the tradition found more general, unquestioned and literal acceptance, that the Torah, *i. e.*, the Pentateuch, had been divinely revealed to Moses, and constituted, therefore, the eternal, unchangeable, all-sufficient law for all Israel. Direct revelation was now altogether a thing of the past. The great, eternal revelation had

partial taste of freedom, granted for a moment to those, compelled finally to make the second choice, had made the renewed oppression and persecution all the more unendurable, did the realization dawn that, theoretically at least, there was possibility of a third choice. Only a few realized it early, Moses Hess and one or two more (Cf. Gottheil, *Zionism*). Only since the reaction of political anti-Semitism set in throughout Europe, with its accompanying philosophy of racial nationalism, has the realization of this third possibility become strong. Zionism is the result. It is a revival of the old national-religious ideal and philosophy, with, however, far less emphasis laid upon the religious, and far more upon the purely national and cultural, elements. The idea of national "holiness" is once more, though perhaps not consciously, the watchword of Zionism.

If the ideal of Zionism should, under God's providence, ever be attained, undoubtedly it will be only the small minority of Jews, or even of Zionists, that will return to the land of their fathers and share actively in the up-building of the new Jewish state. The vast majority will surely, for manifold reasons, remain in their present homes, bound to their brethren in Palestine and throughout the world by close and indissoluble ties, yet at the same time proud, loyal and helpful citizens of the nation in which they live. Nor will it be mere materialism and lack of idealism that will hold them where they are. Possibly, too, the real center of Jewish life and culture and religious practice may be, not at all in Palestine, but, as at present, in Europe, or even in America. And the future of Judaism, particularly Judaism as a religion, may continue in the hands, not of returning nationalists, but of the Jews of the western continents.

No comment is necessary; in fact it would be out of place in a purely objective, historical discussion. But at least it is interesting, and more than interesting, to realize that present-day conditions are largely a replica of those of twenty-four hundred years ago, and that, despite the adverse claims of adherents of opposite schools, Reform Judaism and Orthodoxy and Zionism are all equally natural and logical, though to a certain extent contradictory and incompatible, development in Judaism, all three the legitimate and even necessary products of religious historical evolution under God's providence, which, we maintain, is the fundamental principle of Judaism.

been through Moses¹. Prophetic revelation was of secondary importance and individualistic and personal in character. The prophets were now regarded as mere inspired individuals, rather than as successive links in the great chain of Israel's religious and spiritual unfolding. And the nature of their inspiration and communion with God was different from, and far inferior to, that of Moses. Their words merely amplified the original revelation through Moses in a few minor points. Their great task, according to this new conception of revelation, had been, not to proclaim new truths, but merely to rebuke sinning and faithless Israel, and recall it to its allegiance to its God and its observance of the ancient, sacred law. Everything had been revealed by God to Israel through one man, Moses, in one single lifetime. And because of this conception, the real, prophetic principle of continuous revelation through history was forgotten and ceased to be understood. The Law contained everything for Israel, if not literally, then at least by implication. Revelation was final and complete in the Torah, and its content there might neither be added to nor subtracted from. The interpretation and expansion of the law by various and devious methods of hermeneutics now took the place of pre-exilic, prophetic revelation completely. And slowly, through the centuries, the vast body of oral law grew up and expanded, and the legalistic literature was created, the Mishnah, the Tosefta, the Talmud and the other minor works and later codes. The oral law was conceived of as also of divine origin and authority, equal, or almost equal, to the Torah itself; as indirect and unmediated revelation, as it were, yet equally binding upon the people. And as the Torah came in time to be regarded as almost supersacred and transcendental, the oral law took its place in the life of the people, regulating their daily conduct and worship. The Torah itself was remote, holy, taboo, inviolable. And such it has been ever since in Judaism; in Orthodox Judaism, certainly; in Reform Judaism, still to a large extent².

¹ Cf. Kohler in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, VI, 607f.; X, 397f.

² Cf. Kohler, *Grundriss einer systematischen Theologie des Judentums auf geschichtlicher Grundlage*, 28-37.

II

BIBLICAL SCIENCE AND JUDAISM

During the last two centuries, a new movement in the study and interpretation of the Bible has begun, commonly known as Biblical Criticism. The name is rather unfortunate since "criticism" is to most people a word of negative connotation. To the popular mind, Biblical Criticism represents a dangerous and destructive tendency in Bible study, the aim of which is to pick the Bible to pieces, to deny all its truth, sanctity and religious value, and to undermine all the foundations of religious belief and practice. Such a conception is altogether ignorant of the true nature and purpose of Biblical Criticism. Its sole aim is to discover all the truth about the Bible, just because the Bible is the wonderful book it is. It seeks to learn all it can about the way in which the Bible came into being, the periods in which its various books and parts were composed, the conditions affecting their composition and the purpose for which they were written, and the manifold ways in which they have been interpreted. In many cases, too, where the original Hebrew text has been corrupted through generations and centuries of more or less unskillful and inexact copying by hand, or through other equally potent and comprehensible causes, Biblical Criticism seeks, and with remarkable success, to restore the original text. In all this work it follows strictly scientific methods, bases itself upon the exact principles of logic, and on the whole, with the exception of the vagaries of a few extreme enthusiasts, has worked out its conclusions along safe and conservative lines. For this reason the term, Biblical Science, would seem immeasurably superior to, and more just than, Biblical Criticism.

Biblical Science, as a science, particularly in its relation to the Pentateuch, may be said to have begun, systematically, with Astruc's "Conjectures" in 1753¹. But already from about the middle of the seventeenth century, or even earlier, vague beginnings had been made and hazy conjectures advanced in the writings of Carlstadt, Hobbes, de la Peyrere, Spinoza,

¹ Cf. Carpenter and Harford, *The Composition of the Hexateuch*, 53ff.

Simon, Le Clerc and others¹. Even five or six centuries before this, Yitzchaki (982-1057) had held that Gen. XXXVI must have been written during the reign of Jehosaphat². And Abraham ibn Ezra (1092-1167), while rejecting this hypothesis, hinted nevertheless at twelve significant contradictions and anachronisms in the text of the Pentateuch, and implied that whoever could understand the mystery of these twelve, would understand the truth, which, however, he implied, was of such character as to forbid popular presentation³. Even before Ibn Ezra, and frequently quoted by him, Moses ibn Gikatilla had begun the purely historical interpretation of the Prophets and the Hagiographa, and had advanced, among other things, the hypothesis that the last part of Isaiah was the product of the period of the second Temple, and that certain Psalms, particularly XLII, CXXXVII and the last two verses of LI, were written, not by David, but by Jewish exiles in Babylon⁴. In fact, it would not be at all amiss to assert that modern Biblical Science had its real beginning with Saadia (892-942)⁵, in his system of Biblical interpretation according to the *peshat*⁶, or simple, literal meaning, as opposed to the Midrashic and allegorical exegesis, that obtained up to his time. And the real foundations of Biblical Science were laid in the grammatical and lexicographical works of such Jewish-Arabic scholars as Saadia himself, Menachem ibn Saruk, Dunash ibn Labrat, Judah ibn Hayyug, Abu 'l Walid Merwan ibn Janah, and the Kimchis⁷. In other words, modern Biblical Science is actually the outgrowth of the Biblical studies of mediaeval Jewish scholars, who believed implicitly that, to be rightly understood, the Bible must be studied and interpreted along strictly scientific and rational lines.

But while thus positing the principle of scientific investigation of the Bible, and developing the preliminary studies of Hebrew philology along scientific lines, these mediaeval Jewish

¹ *Op. cit.* 36ff.

² Cf. *Jewish Encyclopedia*, VI, 623.

³ Commentary to Dt. I, 3, and *Jewish Encyclopedia*, VI, 520-524.

⁴ *Op. cit.* V, 666f.

⁵ *Op. cit.* X, 579ff.

⁶ Cf. Bacher in *op. cit.* III, 166 and X, 582f., and Lauterbach in *op. cit.* IX, 652f.

⁷ Cf. Bacher in *op. cit.* VI, 69f.

scholars could scarcely anticipate into what channels and to what conclusions their work must eventually lead. Abraham ibn Ezra had dimly realized this, as is clear from his remark about "the mystery of the twelve." But apparently even he, bold scholar though he was, hesitated to pursue the study along scientific lines to its logical ends, or even to clearly formulate in his own mind the logical inference from this "mystery of the twelve."

For in a way the one all-important, though largely negative conclusion of Biblical Science is that, contrary to the traditional Jewish view, the Torah or Pentateuch is not the work of one man, Moses, but of many men, living at various periods in Israel's early history. It represents the results of literary activity in Israel, extending over a period of about six or seven hundred years, from about 1000 B. C., or a little later, to approximately 400 or 300 B. C. It can therefore not be, in an absolutely literal sense, the divinely revealed word of God¹. This conclusion is based upon an almost overwhelming mass of evidence, and is now generally accepted, except by extreme conservative and orthodox scholars.

But this much was, after all, merely negative work; it consisted chiefly in disapproval and repudiation of traditional beliefs and theories about the Bible and its various books, told, in short, what the Pentateuch and the entire Bible are *not*, and how they might *not* be interpreted historically and scientifically. The beginning of every science, and in fact of every new and significant work, is in criticism, negation and refutation of outgrown beliefs and hypotheses, in tearing out and pulling down and clearing away, in order to build up and to plant². Thus far the term, Biblical Criticism, in its usual negative connotation, was fully justified. True, in refuting the traditional views of Biblical authorship and interpretation, Biblical Criticism did arrive at certain new, and, in a sense, positive conclusions, chiefly as to the authorship and dates of various portions of the Bible. But even this was only preliminary work, and incidental to, and complementary of, the more

¹ Cf. McCurdy in *op. cit.* III, 178.

² Jer. I, 10.

fundamental and negative work of denial and refutation. Only in recent years has the more positive and constructive side of the work come clearly to the fore and become fully and rightly comprehended. Here Biblical Criticism ceases and Biblical Science begins.

Positive Biblical Science may be said to have begun with the epoch-making work of Professor Heinrich Ewald, *The History of Israel*.¹ Since then the science has developed steadily and systematically. Among its foremost pioneers were Kuenen, Nöldeke, Wellhausen, Robertson Smith, Stade, Driver and many others². In recent years the able and earnest workers in this field have become too numerous for mention here. As the result of their faithful labors, and with the help of extra-Biblical material from the fields of Semitics, Egyptology, Archaeology and Comparative Religion, the history of Israel in the Biblical period has been reconstructed so radically and convincingly, that today we view in a new and positive light the rise and growth of the people, Israel, and of its various institutions, political, economic and religious, the whole course of its religious evolution, and its significance for modern religious belief and practice. This is Biblical Science.

Naturally so tremendous a field of scientific investigation offers ample room for wide diversity of opinion and interpretation. There are all manner of scholars, conservatives and radicals; enthusiasts who ride rash and unfounded hypotheses to death, like the late lamented Cheyne in his last years, with his wild and discredited *Yerachme'el* hypothesis; reactionaries, like Eerdmans, whose work, nevertheless, has much positive value, in that it lays an effective check upon too radical and insufficiently proved hypotheses. There are various schools of investigation and interpretation; the literary school, of which Wellhausen is the prototype; the so-called Pan-Babylonian school of Winckler and Alfred Jeremias; the closely related school of comparative mythologists, of whom Stucken is possibly the extreme representative; and the literary-historical school, that bases itself directly upon the literary school, yet in its work

¹ First edition in 1843; cf. Cheyne, *Founders of Old Testament Criticism*, 104ff.

² Cheyne, *op. cit.*

makes wider application of recent discoveries in Semitics, Egyptology, Archaeology, Comparative Religion and Mythology and other kindred sciences. The interests and work of this last school are primarily historical rather than literary, although its close kinship to, and dependence upon, the literary school are universally recognized. Among its members may be found representatives of the two great tendencies in the interpretation of history; scholars who, like Carlyle, regard history primarily as the resultant of the thoughts, achievements and personalities of great individuals; others who, like Buckle, regard the individual, heroic in person and achievement though he be, as a smaller factor in the making of history than the nation or the people or the race itself, with all its racial, psychological and spiritual tendencies and endowments.

Since Biblical Science touches closely upon the vital religious beliefs and traditions of the great majority of the civilized world, and since, moreover, mankind is naturally conservative, traditional, and often reactionary in matters of religion, it is but natural that Biblical Science should have stirred up many opponents, and that these should avidly and constantly point to these many and wide differences of method, opinion and interpretation among Biblical scholars as the best evidence that Biblical Science has discredited itself and proved its conclusions groundless. It is, however, premature rejoicing. These very differences are the final safeguard of Biblical Science; they make it indeed Biblical Science rather than Biblical Criticism, and assure its progress, like that of every other science, along sane, logical, conservative and systematic lines. They are the most convincing evidence that its general conclusions, accepted by the vast majority of modern scholars, are established beyond possibility of doubt, and that the science must go on from strength to strength and from knowledge to knowledge, building up an ever more complete and comprehensive knowledge of Israel, the nation, and Judaism, the religion.

That the course of evolution of this new Biblical Science has been natural and logical is beyond question. First the old, out-lived and disintegrating edifice of traditional beliefs and dogmas was cleared away by the patient, searching investigations of Biblical Criticism, and a new foundation for a loftier

and grander and more enduring temple, consecrated to the knowledge of God, was laid on the ancient site by the literary critics and scholars. On this foundation of the literary analysis of the Bible the new and positive history is being built, the new and glorious temple of the true knowledge of God erected. But what is the significance of this new knowledge for Judaism, and what part have Jewish builders played in the erection of this new temple? Certainly its significance for Judaism must be direct and far-reaching. And presumably Jewish scholars have contributed their share, and a large share, in the evolution of this new and important science, the earliest beginnings of which, as has been shown, were made within their ranks. But alas, such is not the case! Modern Jewish scholars have given almost nothing to the development of the new science. And scarcely has the problem of its actual significance for Judaism been boldly faced and definitely solved by Jewish scholars at large!

For the same reason that Ibn Ezra hesitated to more than merely hint at "the mystery of the twelve" and its import, and felt constrained to reject with scorn Yitzchaki's hypothesis of the date of Gen. XXXVI, so the scientific study of the Pentateuch, with its one, great, obvious conclusion of human, non-Mosaic, composite authorship, was absolutely taboo, anathema, to Jews and Judaism. Spinoza, it is true, attempted it in his *Tractatus Theologico-politicus*, but Spinoza was not bound by the doctrines of Orthodox Judaism. To all Jews since Ezra, the Torah has been the divinely revealed word of God, sacred and revered, the accepted basis of all Judaism. And the scientific conclusion of non-Mosaic and composite authorship seemed necessarily both irreverent and heretical, a profanation of that which Judaism has for twenty-four hundred years held most sacred. In consequence, since Spinoza, with but a few noteworthy exceptions¹, Jewish scholars have contributed nothing

¹ In the field of textual criticism, in addition to Azariah dei Rossi (1513-1578), and so a century older than Spinoza (cf. *Jewish Encyclopedia*, X, 485), S. D. Luzzato (1800-1865; cf. *op. cit.* VIII, 224f.) and Abraham Geiger (cf. below, pp. 249f.) may be mentioned. Among the so-called higher critics of the Pentateuch, Leopold Zunz (cf. Hirsch, in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, XII, 699-704) and M. M. Kalisch (cf. *op. cit.* VII, 420 and Cheyne, *op. cit.*, 204-208) are almost the only notable representatives of Judaism.

at all to the development of the scientific study and interpretation of the Pentateuch¹. Some Jewish names may be mentioned in connection with the modern exegesis of the extra-Pentateuchal books, but even these are very few. And, in consequence, the strange, anomalous, yet altogether natural and comprehensible condition has arisen, that the Bible, the Book of the People of the Book, even in the original Hebrew, is now being interpreted scientifically to the world, and consequently to Jews as well, by non-Jewish scholars, and interpreted often in a non-Jewish, and occasionally even in an anti-Jewish manner and spirit. It is indeed one of the most striking anomalies of the present day.

Nevertheless this scientific interpretation of the Bible, and particularly of the Pentateuch, has powerfully affected modern Jewish belief and practice. The reform movement in Judaism, it has been often, and in a sense correctly, said, began with the Mendelssohnian translation of the Bible into German². This certainly helped mightily to bring the Jew forth from the narrow confines of Ghetto life into the broad, progressive, intellectual and spiritual world³. In a moment, as it were, Reform Judaism was born, the offspring of ancient, traditional Judaism, reacted upon by the new life, culture and environment. Judaism has ever been a religion of actual, present-day life, almost as much the product of contemporaneous environment as of ancient tradition and history. Or, perhaps better expressed, real Judaism has always been the resultant, consciously or unconsciously on the part of its adherents, of continuous historic evolution, crystallized by contemporaneous environment into a present-day religion of actual life. For this reason largely the Jew has always been the most adaptable of men, has found it comparatively easy to accommodate himself to new lands and new conditions and to carry his religion of life with him and adapt it to his ever changing environment, and still maintain it as the religion of life.

¹ Cf. Bacher in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, III, 173f.

² Cf. Philipson, *The Reform Movement in Judaism*, 9 and 12-14.

³ Cf. Kayserling in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, VIII, 483.

Therefore with his political and spiritual emancipation in the first half of the nineteenth century, and his consequent participation in the various modern educational and cultural movements, with his insatiable thirst for knowledge and the large opportunities to acquire knowledge, with schools, colleges, universities and libraries now open to him, the Jew could not remain unaffected by, nor unresponsive to, the teachings of the growing Biblical Science, even though, as yet, he hardly dared contribute actively and positively thereto. The teachings and tenets of Biblical Criticism were in the air in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and cultured and thinking people were more or less affected thereby. Much of the prevailing atheism and agnosticism of that period were the result of the misunderstanding and wrong application of the Biblical Criticism of that time.

To a certain extent, though in an altogether different way, Reform Judaism was likewise influenced by the current Biblical Criticism of the middle quarters of the nineteenth century. For one of the most pronounced external manifestations of the reform movement in Judaism has been the disregard and abandonment of many ancient, ceremonial institutions, even some whose observance is commanded in the Torah, and is not due merely to rabbinical expansion of Pentateuchal commands. Such laws as those concerning fringes¹, mixtures in garments², shaving the corners of the head³, *chalitzah*⁴ and many others, conformity to which is in no wise conditioned by the non-existence of the Temple, are observed today by few, if any, Reform Jews. Other laws, dependent upon the existence of the Temple and the survival of the Aaronic priesthood, are abandoned of necessity, and, for the most part, with but little regret. In practice, at least, a negative principle seems to determine the attitude of Reform Judaism toward the laws of the Torah. In the main, only those laws are still considered binding which have a positive ethical sanction or a fundamental spiritual, religious value. Other laws need not be, and as a rule, are not, observed. A few laws, negative in character, *i. e.*, laws that

¹ Num. XV, 38-41; Dt. XXII, 12. ² Lev. XIX, 27; XXI, 5.

³ Lev. XIX, 19; Dt. XXII, 11. ⁴ Dt. XXV, 5-10.

prohibit some positive act, as, for example, many of the laws dealing with forbidden foods, are still observed by some conservatives. But even such negative observance is becoming less. More and more a sense of absolution from the observance of Biblical, as well as rabbinic laws, that apparently have little or no spiritual or ethical import or sanction, and in consequence the practical abrogation of these laws, is asserting itself in Reform Judaism. This attitude could hardly have developed, or even have begun to develop, without at least tacit, or perhaps unconscious, but none the less real, recognition during the middle quarters of the nineteenth century of the principles and conclusions of Biblical Criticism.

But from the theoretical standpoint, it must be admitted that this attitude is altogether illogical, particularly on the part of those who still believe, or wish to believe, in the divine origin and Mosaic authorship of the Torah. Laws of divine origin can not be abrogated by mere considerations of expediency, or even of outgrown spiritual or ethical value. The very fact of divine origin must lend to even the apparently most trivial laws positive, spiritual sanction. The first logical act of Reform Judaism, therefore, should have been to face clearly and bravely the very difficult and delicate question of the historic correctness of the tradition of the divine origin and Mosaic authorship of the Torah, and only when this question had been answered, after mature consideration, with an unqualified negative, would the next step have been justified, namely, the determination of the proper attitude of Reform Judaism toward the laws of the Torah, and the abrogation of such laws as had been outgrown. Until the Torah had been proved not of divine origin and Mosaic authorship, there could, logically, be no right nor authority to disregard its laws; there could be no attitude other than that of strictest Orthodoxy, namely, unquestioning acceptance and scrupulous observance.

That some, at least, of the pioneer reformers were not blind to this truth is certain. It is interesting to note that, in attempting to justify the abrogation of certain ceremonial institutions, Samuel Holdheim gave expression to the significant principle that "the spirit of the age is also a revelation of God,

and that this commanded the abolition of many observances that had religious sanction at one time."¹ Elsewhere he asserted that "the present requires a principle, that shall enunciate clearly that a law, even though divine, is potent only so long as the conditions and circumstances of life, to meet which it was enacted, continue; when these change, however, the law also must be abrogated, even though it have God for its author. For God Himself has shown indubitably that with the change of the circumstances and conditions of life for which He once gave these laws, the laws themselves cease to be operative, that they *shall* be observed no longer because they *can* be observed no longer * * * *. The present age and its guiding principle, as thus formulated, recognize the working of God in history; it believes truly and firmly in the providential guidance of the fortunes of mankind; it looks upon the deeds recorded in the history of mankind as the deeds of God, whereby He speaks as clearly as He ever did; a particular revelation of God to a single person is dispensable when God speaks to all and reveals His will to all."² In this declaration Holdheim seems not only to have rejected entirely the orthodox conception of revelation through Moses and the Torah, but also to have unconsciously returned, though by no means completely, to the ancient, prophetic conception. But the problem of reform seems to have presented itself to him chiefly in its negative aspect. His main concern, as in fact that of all early Reform Judaism, seems to have been the abrogation of outgrown laws, rather than the determination of the proper guiding principle of positive reform and progress. It is true that he did show some appreciation of the positive principle in his declaration about the God of history revealing Himself through history, and in just this respect he approached close to the prophetic conception of revelation. But his application of the principle was almost completely negative and limited.

Still less logical and satisfactory was the position of the Frankfort Society of the Friends of Reform, and others with and after them, who shared their view, that the true solution

¹ Quoted from Philipson, *op. cit.* 13.

² *Op. cit.* 180 note.

of the problem of reform lay in the repudiation of rabbinical law and literature and the return to Mosaism, *i. e.*, the observance of the Pentateuchal laws alone¹. Not only did this movement fail utterly to appreciate the real, inward truth of Judaism and its history, as Philipson has so ably shown, but it likewise rested upon a false scientific basis. For it applied the principle of scientific investigation to the rabbinical portion of the content of orthodox revelation, with the negative conclusion that the oral law was not of divine origin and consequently no longer binding. But it failed, or refused, to apply this same principle to the Torah. Instead it insisted unquestioningly upon the historical correctness of the tradition of Mosaic revelation, yet, at the same time, it ventured to disregard and abrogate various Pentateuchal laws. This was the extreme of inconsistency.

Far more thoroughgoing, scholarly and convincing was the pronouncement of Abraham Geiger, that "the genius of the people of Israel is the vehicle of revelation."² Elsewhere Geiger declared revelation to be "an illumination of the Jewish genius by the Divine Mind, which caused the whole people to come nearer the everlasting truth than any other. Judaism is not a religion given by one man; Israel's God is not called the God of Moses, or of Isaiah, but of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that is, of the fathers of the nation, who imparted the deep powers of religious intention and inspiration to all the seers, singers and teachers, the framers of the Jewish religion."³ In accordance with this principle, Geiger insisted constantly that the entire Bible, including the Torah, and also the Talmud and all Jewish literature, must be studied from a strictly historical standpoint. Judaism is essentially a historical religion, the resultant of natural historical evolution, and only when studied and expounded from this standpoint, can Judaism be rightly understood⁴. Far more

¹ *Op. cit.* 179f.

² Quoted from Hirsch in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, V, 584ff.

³ Quoted from Kohler in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, X, 397.

⁴ Cf. in particular, Geiger's articles, "Das Judenthum unserer Zeit und die Bestrebungen in ihm," in his *Zeitschrift für jüdische Theologie*, I (1835), 2f. and 11, and "Der Boden zur Aussaat," in his *Jüdische Zeitschrift für Wissenschaft und Leben*, I (1862), 1-9.

than any of the other pioneer reformers, Geiger appreciated this principle fully. And, almost alone among them,¹ he conscientiously, boldly and unreservedly gave himself to the scientific study of the Bible, and particularly of the history of the original Hebrew text and its translations, always with full understanding of the significance of these studies for the reform movement in Judaism. His is one of the few Jewish names to which we may point with pride among the founders of modern Biblical Science. His chief critical work, *Urschrift und Uebersetzungen der Bibel*², is still today of prime scientific value.

Since Geiger, however, many, if not most, of our reform leaders have only tacitly, and on the whole rather reluctantly, admitted the main conclusions of Biblical Science. And instead of continuing Geiger's work of unfolding the significance of this developing science for Reform Judaism, they have, for one reason or another, devoted themselves rather to what is generally considered the practical and popular side of the work of reform. Many today, animated by the so-called current neo-orthodoxy and reaction against reform, and with a short-sighted fear of the evident, logical conclusions, even pride themselves somewhat upon having assumed an attitude toward Biblical Science, which they call sane and conservative, but which is in reality reactionary, unscientific and illogical. Like the ostrich, which, unable to escape its pursuers, hides its head in the sand, and, no longer actually beholding the danger, thinks itself safe, so too, these present-day "sane and conservative", unprogressive

¹ As has been stated, Zunz, too, accepted the conclusions of Biblical Criticism unreservedly, and even himself contributed something thereto (cf. his writings in the *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, XXVII, 669-689, and *Gesammelte Schriften*, I, 217-270). But Zunz himself was not a conscious religious reformer, nor even in full sympathy with the purpose and tendencies of early Reform Judaism (cf. Hirsch in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, XII, 699-704). His interest in Biblical studies was purely academic and scientific. And while, in his letters to David Kaufmann, he did give expression to the significant thoughts, "opinions on books are not subject to the authority of religion," and "why do they not inquire whether it be true or false? Miserable men they, who desire not to be disturbed" (quoted from *op. cit.* 704), none the less he did not feel called upon to discuss the import of his own Biblical studies or of all Biblical Criticism for Judaism.

² Breslau, 1857.

progressives believe that so long as they refuse to acknowledge the validity of Biblical Science, or even to admit the existence of the problems which Biblical Science labors to solve, just so long neither the problems themselves nor the solution offered by Biblical Science exist, either for them or for Reform Judaism at large. Others seek to compromise, and would harmonize the old traditional belief in the divine origin and Mosaic authorship of the Torah with the dicta of Biblical Science, by recourse to an artificial, pragmatic theology and frequent reference to Mysticism and tendencies toward Mysticism in the latest systems of philosophy, particularly those of Bergson and Eucken. Mysticism is a term altogether justifiable in its application to that which is as yet unknown, or which may be eternally unknowable, yet which must be considered in theological thought and discussion; but in its misapplication to that which is, or may easily be, known by every one, even themselves, too frequent reference to Mysticism almost indicates insufficient intellectual courage and faith. Certainly these are anomalous, silly, fearsome and pitiful attitudes for professed leaders of a supposedly progressive movement.

At the same time neither they nor the founders and early leaders of Reform Judaism, other than Geiger, are to be blamed too greatly for their inconsistency and lack of logic. As a rule movements like Reform Judaism do not arise and develop along the lines of strict logic. They are far oftener the result of spiritual, economic or cultural needs or tendencies, and the logic follows later in the inevitable need for readjustment and reestablishment upon a truly safe, sane and philosophic basis. For this reason the rise of Reform Judaism and its development up to the present day accord strictly with historical principles. The reform movement in Judaism was a historical necessity. And the present negative attitude toward the laws of the Torah could hardly have been at all other than it is. But while admitting all this, we must recognize too that the early leaders of Reform Judaism, and many of our leaders today, did and do, in their virtual abrogation of the majority of the Pentateuchal laws, put the cart before the horse, and were and are distinctly illogical and inconsistent.

But for us today conditions are different. Reform Judaism is now well established and its program of work and line of future evolution can be fairly clearly foreseen. For us the work of readjustment and of logical reestablishment has begun, in order that the future development may proceed smoothly and evenly and along definite, positive and constructive lines. The fact of the human, composite authorship is today beyond question, and must be admitted, even though grudgingly, by the most conservative and traditional of our present-day leaders of Reform Judaism. And the majority do admit, even though reluctantly, to themselves at least, and very many to their congregations also, the fact of human, composite authorship of the Pentateuch. And thus, they believe, they justify, in a way and with a certain logic, the negative attitude which Reform Judaism has had, through historical necessity, to assume toward the laws of the Torah. But it must be admitted, that this is, like the first position of Biblical Criticism, at best purely negative work, defining what the Torah is *not* and what the Bible is *not*, and what significance and binding force the Biblical laws and narratives need *not*, or can *not*, have.

But in this negative position, which Biblical Science on its part has at last outgrown, Reform Judaism can not longer abide. Nor can we remain content with the strange anomaly that our Bible should be investigated and expounded scientifically, expounded for us Jews too, only by non-Jewish scholars, and often even from a non-Jewish standpoint and with non-Jewish sympathy. Biblical Science is today recognized as an established and legitimate science, and the significance of its conclusions and teachings for all religious belief and practice is becoming increasingly understood. More and more practically all creeds and denominations today are being compelled, generally against their will, to notice seriously, and take definite stand in regard to, the principles and teachings of Biblical Science. Usually their first position is wholly negative and antagonistic. But as the years pass, slowly but steadily this first position is being modified in the face of the irrefutable and persistent truths which Biblical Science proclaims. And with this change of position, more and more the realization is dawning, that Biblical Science and its teachings are not at all negative nor dangerous nor destructive

of true religion and true faith, but on the contrary are altogether positive, helpful and constructive. Old, deep-rooted errors, blinding superstitions and falsely accentuated doctrines are being swept away; emphasis is laid upon the fundamental and vital principles of religious life and faith; and the path is being prepared for intelligent, rational and progressive observance and practice. More and more this truth is becoming apparent, and religion today is undergoing a noticeable and significant transformation.

But no more, and in reality far less, than any other present-day, progressive religion or denomination, can Reform Judaism refuse to take cognizance of Biblical Science, or shut eyes and ears to its teachings. If, as some believe, or wish to believe, the conclusions of Biblical Science be not true, they should be refuted by competent Jewish scholars and their falseness proved, that Judaism may be left free to develop unhampered by their pernicious influence. But in such case Reform Judaism must logically renounce its present negative attitude toward the Torah and its laws, and revive the observance of all the divinely ordained Biblical statutes.

But if the main conclusions of Biblical Science are correct and can not be refuted, and more and more it is becoming evident that such is the case, then it is indeed high time that Reform Judaism advance beyond its negative attitude of tacit denial of the divine origin and Mosaic authorship of the Torah, and consequent justification of its disregard of those laws which do not accord with its philosophy of life, religion and ethics; it is high time that it begin to assume a positive attitude, that it ask itself, "If the Torah be not, as our ancestors believed, of divine origin and Mosaic authorship, and therefore all the laws of the Torah be not literally binding upon us, nor the Pentateuchal account of the beginnings of our religion necessarily literally true, what then is the actual, early history of Israel; what the real origin and first development of our religion; what the positive significance of the Torah, its narratives and its laws, for Judaism today and in the future?"¹ Surely we can not disre-

¹ Cf. Kohler, *Grundriss einer systematischen Theologie des Judentums auf geschichtlicher Grundlage*, 34ff.

gard the Torah entirely, nor reject our Bible completely. Even though we do know that it is not what tradition proclaimed it, for us it is still the Bible, the Book, our Book, and we are still the People of the Book. And from its inspiring pages we not only can and must still gather eternal, ethical truth and knowledge, but also, if it be rightly understood and interpreted, as Biblical Science now teaches, we may learn from it just how our ancestors arrived at all this ethical and spiritual truth, how they came to know God at first just a little, and how, as the years and centuries passed, this knowledge of God grew and grew; how, even though it was not given to them either to behold God's face or to know the fullness of His way, yet little by little they did come to see His back and hear His voice and learn His true name, and step by step He did reveal to them through His servants, the prophets, and through the course of their long and wondrous and God-guided history, as much of His way as it has been given to man thus far to know. This is the history of our religion, our Judaism. And a part, and a most significant part, of this history we may learn from this new study of the Bible. We still believe in God's self-revelation through history, through the history of the past, rightly understood and interpreted, and through the history of the present. Reform Judaism, following Geiger, adheres firmly to the principle of historic evolution, and regards itself as the last step, up to the present day, in the great historic evolution that began with the very moment of Israel's birth as a people, or, even before that, in all the events and circumstances antecedent and preparatory thereto, and has continued through the successive periods of Jewish history and Jewish life down to the present day, and will continue through the present day into the great infinite tomorrow of life and history.

For just this reason Reform Judaism may no longer stand still in its purely negative attitude, and refuse, through its reputed leaders, to either affirm or deny the conclusions of Biblical Science. To correctly and fully understand our Judaism of today, and to properly and constructively guide and further its future evolution, as far as it lies within our power so to do, we must know all its past history aright, and in as great detail

as possible. And above all, we must know the history of our people and our religion as Biblical Science reconstructs it for us, *i. e.*, as our Bible, truly interpreted, teaches it to us, in the earliest period of its origin and first development, when it was just beginning to unfold itself, to formulate its eternal, wondrous message of ethical monotheism and human brotherhood, was preparing to assume its unique and glorious position in human history as the world's teacher of religion, the witness unto mankind of God's truth, the bearer unto man of the knowledge of God's life on earth.

But for just this end, that we may know our religion and our whole history aright, we must have our own Jewish Biblical scientists, who will reconstruct and interpret this history from a positive Jewish standpoint, in accordance with our historic Jewish consciousness and with full appreciation of the principle of historic continuity in Judaism. For us this science is far more vital than for any others. It is our literature, our history and our religion that are the objects of its investigation. And we must face the issue squarely and work out for ourselves the full, scientific knowledge of the origin and history of our people and our religion. Our procedure must be conservative, reverent and sympathetic, with tender consideration for time-consecrated tradition. As far as possible we must guard against all possible errors and too hasty or radical conclusions. But if many of our conclusions be untraditional, as they needs must be, none the less we must have implicit faith in them, and bravely work them out and apply them in their full significance. We must have full faith in ourselves, and others will then have faith in us, that we are not destroying the foundations of our Judaism, as many short-sighted and timorous traditionalists fear. We are not questioning the existence of God, nor denying, nor abrogating a single one of the vital, spiritual truths of Judaism. We are merely perfecting our knowledge of Judaism, our knowledge of the way in which our ancestors and our fathers and we ourselves came to know what we do know about God and the life He has ordained that man should live. We are returning, as it were, to the conception of revelation and of religion that was held by the prophets; are interpreting all our history, from its

beginning unto the present day, in the same spirit as they interpreted it; are conscious of the God of our fathers revealing Himself to us still to-day, and to all mankind throughout eternity, as He did to Israel of old. And we too, as the prophets, may feel His spirit upon us, His voice speaking through us, and His message of the ages upon our tongues. God in history, in the history of the present and the future, as well as of the past; God eternally revealing Himself and His purpose unto mankind, and we the agents of His revelation; the people whom He chose to be His witnesses and His messengers unto mankind, His prophet-people, who must interpret His revelation unto our brothers, His children also, all mankind—this is the true message of Judaism, if only we can open our eyes and understand and proclaim it. And in this spirit of truth and progress and continuous revelation and historic evolution, that are the real, basic principles of our religion, we must study and interpret our Bible for ourselves and for the Jewish people at large; and not only our Bible, but all our vast literature and all our unique and wonderful and inspiring history. And thereby we shall add our little mite to the true knowledge of God and God's way, which we call Judaism, and which we shall preserve and develop and hand down as our proudest and most sacred heritage to our children and our children's children.

In this spirit and with this end constantly in mind, we turn now to the consideration, from the strictly scientific standpoint, of the foundations, or perhaps better, some of the foundations, of Israel's history, national, religious and spiritual.

III.

THE SOURCES OF ISRAEL'S EARLY HISTORY

The authentic history of Israel begins only with the entrance of the tribes into Canaan. Even for some time thereafter there is not a single event of which we have detailed information. Not until the reign of David can we follow the course of history with anything approaching proper consecution. David established a typical Oriental monarchy. Among his numerous court officials was the *sofer*, the court scribe, who recorded the

illustrious deeds of the king and the glorious events of his reign¹. Thereafter we have the Chronicles of Solomon and the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel and Judah, which, later, constituted the chief sources of the authors of the Books of Kings.²

The institution of the monarchy marks the beginning of systematic literary activity in Israel. A purely agricultural people, living under tribal or semi-tribal government, and during the latter portion of the pre-monarchic period either subject to the oppressive Philistine yoke, or engaged in a death-struggle for independence, could have neither opportunity, inclination nor probably even ability to produce a historical or national literature. In fact, there could be neither national literature nor national history, until the nation had actually come into existence. Not until the time of David were the loosely-related tribes bound together into a fairly close union. Until then they had existed as almost totally independent ethnic units, with merely the nucleus of a nation gradually evolving in a loose federation of five or six tribes in the central and northern parts of the country. Accordingly all traditions and whatever literature existed before the establishment of the nation must have been altogether tribal in character. The traditions were handed down within the tribe, and were recited in poetic form at tribal gatherings. Such has ever been the beginning of literature, and especially among the Semitic peoples³. Science has proved conclusively, that the oldest portions of Hebrew literature are certain Biblical poems or fragments of poems⁴.

But the moment literature ceases to be the product of passing enthusiasm and ecstasy, and comes to deal in systematic, comprehensive manner with every-day life, it descends from poetry to prose. But just because of this, prose can begin only when a people at large reaches a certain high stage of culture

¹ Cf. II Sam. VIII, 17; XX, 25.

² I Ki. XI, 41; XIV, 19, 29, and *passim* in I and II Ki.

³ Cf. Wellhausen, *Reste des altarabischen Heidentums*, 84ff.; Moore, *Judges; International Critical Commentary*, 136.

⁴ Typical among these, and of paramount historical significance is the song of Deborah (Jud. V), undoubtedly the product of the 12th century B. C., cf. Moore *op. cit.* 127-173.

and finds opportunity and leisure for literary activity. This condition, too, began to obtain in Israel only after the establishment of the monarchy. It were an easy task, did time permit, to trace the course of Israel's literary history. However, we can state here only in a summary manner that absolutely every bit of prose in the Bible was written only after the rise of the kingdom under David, and was consequently composed entirely from the national standpoint. The entire Bible, therefore, with the exception of a few ancient poetic fragments, represents Israel as a united people of such long standing that the national consciousness dominates everything. The tribal standpoint is almost entirely forgotten, and traditions, originally tribal in character, have been modified and recast altogether from the national point of view. Originally tribal heroes, like Gideon and Jephthah, have been made over into national heroes. So completely did the people come to feel itself a nation, that the true account of its national origin under David was altogether forgotten in favor of a gradually rising and commonly accepted tradition, that ascribed the origin of the united people to remote antiquity and to one common ancestor.

This partially *a priori* account of the beginning and first development of literary activity in Israel is fully corroborated by modern Biblical Science. We know now that the entire Hexateuch, *i. e.*, the Pentateuch plus Joshua, is, with the exception of a few fragments of ancient poems, the product of the period between 932 B. C., the date of the division of the kingdom, and the 4th or 3rd century B. C. It is absolutely certain that not one word of the Hexateuch goes back to the traditional period of desert wanderings. We know that this Hexateuch is the work of various writers and epochs, and that the different portions or documents were written under varying conditions and with varying purposes, and have in consequence unequal historical value.

Hence, for the early period of Israel's sojourn in Canaan, comparatively little trustworthy material exists in the Hexateuch. Merely a few traditions from the oldest sources, found chiefly in Exodus, Numbers and Joshua, have value. Our chief material is found in Judges and Samuel, large portions of which

belong to the very oldest Biblical sources. The information thus gathered is strongly corroborated and supplemented by the evidence of modern excavations, by the Tell-el-Amarna letters and kindred documents, and occasional, scattered references upon Egyptian and Babylonian monuments, and by the study of Beduin customs and beliefs of today. From this scanty material we must reconstruct our early history of Israel. Small wonder that it must be fragmentary, with many and serious lacunae, and that many questions must be left unsolved, at least for the present. Still we can reconstruct the history sufficiently to follow, in considerable detail, Israel's developing religious, social and economic life, and determine the origin, growth and real significance of its various distinctive institutions. And this, we believe, is history.

IV

ISRAEL IN THE DESERT

Israel's real history begins only with the entrance of the tribes into Canaan. The Hexateuch, written entirely from the national standpoint, records the commonly accepted tradition of twelve tribes, having first conquered the country east of the Jordan, crossing the river under the leadership of Joshua and, in two short campaigns, subduing the entire country and exterminating all the original inhabitants except the Gibeonites. Then the land is divided by lot among the nine and one-half tribes, two and one-half having already received their portions east of the Jordan. On its face this story seems improbable. How can a land, of irregular dimensions and varying fertility, be properly divided by lot among nine and one-half tribes, of unequal size and undoubtedly of varying habits, in such manner that each tribe shall not only feel a sense of perfect fairness in the allotment, but shall also receive a portion commensurate with its size and needs?

This doubt is corroborated by the evidence of the extra-Hexateuchal books. These state clearly that the Canaanites were not speedily nor completely conquered nor exterminated. Jerusalem withstood the attacks of Benjamin, and succumbed

at last only to the prowess of David and Judah, at least a century and a half after the entrance of the tribes into Canaan¹. Gezer remained unconquered until the reign of Solomon². And for at least a half century after the entrance of the tribes, the Canaanites continued to hold the greater and more fertile and desirable portion of the country, and were only gradually conquered and assimilated.

Furthermore abundant Biblical evidence establishes conclusively that originally there were many more tribes than the traditional twelve. We hear in this early period of Machir, Ya'ir, Gilead, Qain, Qenaz, Caleb and Yerachme'el. Egyptian monuments likewise seem to prove the presence in Canaan, a century or so before the advent of the main body of the tribes, of small nomad, or semi-nomad, tribes, called Israel³, Jacob-el, Joseph-el and Asher⁴, names of such prime importance in later national tradition, that we can not, in the light of early tribal history, but correlate these tribes with the large body of Israel. The actual condition of only twelve tribes did not obtain until David amalgamated a number of small, semi-nomad tribes in the south, among them Caleb, Qain, Qenaz and Yerachme'el, with Judah and made this the nucleus of the united kingdom.

Furthermore these same books prove conclusively that the tribes did not enter the land together under the leadership of one man, Joshua. Instead they entered separately, at different times and different places. Each tribe was absolutely independent of all other tribes, a separate ethnic unit, with little or no sense of relationship with the other tribes. Each proceeded independently, or, at most, in temporary league with one or two other tribes, to conquer a portion of the country for itself, and for many years could maintain itself there only with difficulty and varying success. And the relations between the tribes themselves during their first sojourn in the land were, quite

¹ Jud. I, 8, 21; II Sam. V, 6-9; cf. Moore *op. cit.* 3-10.

² I Ki. IX, 16.

³ Cf. the so-called "Israel-stele" of Merneptah, in Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, III, 602f.

⁴ Cf. W. Max Mueller, *Asien u. Europa nach altägyptischen Denkmälern*, 162ff.; 236ff.

as often as not, those of rivalry, and even open hostility, now and then momentarily checked in the presence of danger from the common enemy, Canaanites and Philistines, only, however, to flare forth again when the danger had passed.

But if, at the moment of entrance into Canaan, the tribes were thus totally unrelated, with no sense at all of common origin or community of interest; if each tribe was absolutely a separate and independent ethnic unit, it follows necessarily that there could, strictly speaking, have been no common, intertribal religion nor deity, that there must have been instead separate tribal religions and separate tribal deities, at least as many such separate deities as there were tribes. This *a priori*, yet altogether logical and necessary, conclusion is confirmed by abundant evidence. We know not only of separate tribal gods in this early period, but also that, with but one important exception, they were all represented by cult-objects. The ark at Shiloh, which was captured by the Philistines¹, was originally the cult-object of Ephraim; the *ephod* which Ebiathar brought down to David², and through which thereafter David consulted the oracle, was a cult-object of Benjamin; the idol of Micah, the Ephraimite, which the tribe of Dan stole, when compelled by the Philistines to abandon their old home on the Mediterranean coast and seek a new abode in the far north, became the tribal god and cult-object of Dan³; apparently the golden *ephod* which Gideon set up at Ophra⁴, became the tribal cult-object of the new and larger Manasseh, which Gideon created by amalgamating with the original Manasseh the greatly decimated tribes of Machir and Ya'ir. In all likelihood the brazen serpent in the Temple, which Hezekiah at last felt compelled to destroy⁵, was originally a tribal cult-object, though of what tribe it is impossible to say.

But while absolutely certain that, on entering Canaan, the tribes constituted separate ethnic units, and therefore had separate tribal gods and tribal religions, none the less, at least in the fundamentals of religion, they did have something positive and

¹ I Sam. IV-VI.

⁴ Jud. VIII, 24-27.

² I Sam. XXI, 10; XXIII, 6.

⁵ II Ki. XVIII, 4.

³ Jud. XVII-XVIII.

vital in common. For real religion is entirely the product of a people's daily life. Neither individual nor people can think beyond, at least not far beyond, daily needs and experiences. Especially is this true of primitive peoples, such as the tribes at that time were. Such a people, at best, conceives of its gods as those supernatural powers which are able to satisfy all its needs; and all worship will be directed to the one great aim of inducing or compelling these deities to so function that these needs will be surely satisfied. Therefore, if possible in a general way to determine the fundamental needs of any primitive people, it is equally possible in a general way to infer how it will conceive of its gods and how it will worship them. A people that has progressed no further than the hunting stage of civilization will have what might truly be called a hunting religion. It will conceive of its gods as those powers that increase the supply of game and give success in the chase. A nomad or pastoral people will have similarly a pastoral religion, an agricultural people an agricultural religion, and a commercial people a commercial religion. But as a commercial people comes into intimate contact with foreign peoples and becomes subject to foreign influences, its life necessarily becomes increasingly complex. And because we can no longer measure all the forces that influence this daily life, we can no longer determine deductively what a commercial people's religion must be. But until this stage the task is simple and comparatively easy.

It is also self-evident that as a people gradually passes from one stage of civilization to the next, the religious development must follow apace. A hunting people can not have an agricultural religion. But equally an agricultural people must have completely, or almost completely, outgrown its earlier hunting religion. If the transition from one stage of civilization to the next be normal and gradual, the religious evolution, too, will be slow and natural. But if the transition be rapid, and, in a certain sense, abnormal, it follows that the people must develop its new religion in a rapid, unnatural manner, borrowing largely from those foreign sources, contact with which has brought about the transition.

When the tribes forced their way into Canaan, they came from out the great Arabian desert to the east and south. There

they had lived, for decades and centuries, as typical nomads, practically the same life that the Beduin in the vast, unchangeable desert still live today. The sojourn in Egypt and the exodus under Moses were undoubtedly historical facts, but only in the life of some one single tribe, probably Judah¹, and certainly not in the life of all the tribes, and still less of the united people or nation. But whatever their actual historic reality, they left practically no impress upon the early life or fortunes of any of the tribes. Throughout their pre-Canaan, desert existence, the tribesmen had been typical Beduin, wandering about with flocks and herds in constant search of pasturage and water. Such a life is necessarily of the simplest. The civilization of any people may well be measured by its household, and particularly by its kitchen, equipment. And where the contents of the tent must be so limited, that at almost a moment's notice they can be readily packed, while the clan moves onward in search of new pasturage, it follows that the life itself, with all its needs, must be simple indeed. The needs of the Beduin might, then and now, be reduced to three; first, pasturage and water for sheep and cattle; second, offspring of sheep and cattle; and, finally, human offspring, that the race, or, more specifically, the family, clan and tribe, might not perish. In common with most primitive peoples, the Beduin feels that he himself can not satisfy these needs. But with these satisfied, he can easily shift for himself. Consequently he conceives of god or gods as those superhuman powers that produce human and animal offspring, and cause the scanty desert herbage to sprout, and the precious water to well forth. Just such a Beduin picture of the deity and of life and its origin, we have in the oldest version of the Paradise story². And all Beduin worship will be directed, not towards giving thanks for blessings received, for thanksgiving is an advanced and quite spiritual conception, totally unknown to primitive man, but towards inducing or compelling these deities to continue these indispensable blessings.

¹ Cf. above p. 229.

² Gen. II, 7-9; 16-25; III, 1-7a; 8-18; 19a^β; 21-22a; 23; 24b^β; cf. Gunkel, *Genesis*³ to II 9, 16 and III 16-19.

From all this it is clear that, although there were practically as many separate religions as there were tribes, and certainly at least as many gods, these separate tribal religions must have been very similar to one another, both in theology, if this term may be used for something so primitive, and in ritual. And although each tribe necessarily had its own tribal god and cult-object, none the less all these gods must have been conceived of as possessing much the same powers, discharging much the same functions, subject to much the same influences, and therefore to be worshipped in much the same manner. While, accordingly, we may not for one moment disregard this essential fact of the separate tribal gods and religions, we may nevertheless speak correctly of tribal religion in general, *i. e.*, the fundamental principles and rites of pastoral religion which all the tribes had in common. This necessarily contrasted strongly with the typically agricultural religion of the Canaanites, with which these tribes now came into intimate contact, and served as a certain mark of distinction from the Canaanites, and as a certain bond of union between the tribes. Out in the desert, where no other religious conceptions could obtain, this fact of common religious fundamentals could have no significance nor unifying force. But in the new land, with its strange, agricultural life and religion, the facts of common desert origin, common religious fundamentals, and common Canaanite enemy, must have served as powerful forces, making for ever closer tribal federation.

And as the tribes grew together into larger and ever fewer ethnic groups, the various tribal gods had of necessity to fuse correspondingly, largely just because they were the outgrowths of the same fundamental conceptions. And when, out of the many, separate, independent tribes, one nation did at last evolve, it follows that the separate tribal gods must finally have fused completely, until the conception of a national god, logically and necessarily, sprang into being.

But it must not be inferred that these gods were mere abstract, philosophic conceptions, the resultants and expressions of the tribesmen's daily needs, and that this gradual fusion proceeded in an abstract and philosophic manner. Each tribal

god was a highly concrete and individualized deity. The power of each extended only over his own particular territory and tribe, with all the members of which he was intimately related, either as the divine father, or through a covenant, established and frequently renewed by means of a peculiar covenant-sacrifice¹. Of this sacrifice the tribesmen themselves ate the greater part. But a portion was also given to the deity, and was thought to be actually consumed by him. It is this covenant-sacrifice that later developed into the so-called "peace-offering." And since each tribal god was thus individualized, it follows in particular that each had his own individual name, that distinguished him from all other deities. Among the early Semites, as among almost all primitive peoples, the name is an indispensable part of the deity's being. Until his real name is known, so that prayers and sacrifices may be directed to him in person, it is absolutely impossible to worship him². Hence the four different Biblical traditions of the revelation of the divine name³ imply four different accounts of the moment and manner in which the worship of Jahwe actually began in Israel.

Unfortunately, however, few of the names of these original tribal deities have been preserved, so completely have the ancient tribal traditions been reworked to accord with the later national standpoint. We hear, almost accidentally, that in his covenant with Laban Jacob swears in the name of *Pachad Yitzchaq*⁴, undoubtedly a deity, and presumably an ancient tribal deity. Possibly too, though by no means certainly, *Shaddai*, so frequently used as an appellative of the deity in the early part of the Priestly Code⁵, was originally the name of a tribal god. However the only name of which we can be absolutely sure is *Jahwe*, undoubtedly originally the god of the Qenites. His worship passed over to the larger tribe of Judah,

¹ Cf. Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites*², 269ff.

² Cf. my *Doctrine of Sin in the Babylonian Religion* (*Mitteilungen des vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft*, 1905, 3) 35ff.

³ Gen. IV, 26; Ex. III, 1-15; VI, 3; XXXIV, 6.

⁴ Gen. XXXI, 53.

⁵ Gen. XVII, 1; XXVIII, 3; XXXV, 11; Ex. VI, 3; cf. Carpenter and Harford, *The Composition of the Hexateuch*, 54f.

when, under David, the Qenites were amalgamated with that tribe, or perhaps some time before this. And when at last the nation came into being under David, it was but natural that his own tribe, Judah, then the largest and most powerful of all the tribes, should exert the dominant influence in the development of the national principles and institutions. And while the consequent national religion was the result of the fusion of the various tribal religions, and the national god a composite picture, as it were, of the various tribal gods, still to this composite, national deity the god of Judah naturally contributed, not only the most numerous and distinctive features, but also the name Jahwe. The various names of the other tribal gods were speedily and purposely forgotten.

Just because this new national god was a composite picture of the separate tribal gods, and likewise was perhaps the most concrete possible expression of the supreme fact that out of the many separate tribes one nation had at last evolved, David, probably as the very master stroke of his diplomacy, planned a brand-new sanctuary to this brand-new deity in his brand-new capital. And as a further piece of diplomacy, he brought up the old ark of Ephraim from Kiriath-ye'arim, where it had lain, almost forgotten, for three-quarters of a century, and deposited it in his temporary sanctuary at Jersusalem¹. It showed concretely that the old tribal god of Ephraim was now one with the new national god of united Israel. And for the same reason he must have deposited in the sanctuary the *ephod* of Benjamin, and presumably, too, many of the cult-objects of the other tribes, among them, no doubt, the brazen serpent. But it was inevitable that these cult-objects undergo a complete transformation under the influence of the new national god and national religion. The brazen serpent, apparently alone, for some reason or other, continued to receive a certain measure of worship, necessitating its eventual destruction by Hezekiah. Most of the cult-objects seem to have speedily disappeared. The *ephod* of Benjamin was gradually transformed by tradition, until it became, in the Priestly Code, the '*Urim* and *Tummim* in the high-priest's breastplate, bound

¹ II Sam. VI.

by the *ephod* to the sacred garments¹. And the ark of Ephraim, apparently the most important tribal cult-object, containing probably a sacred stone, or *betyl*, in which, according to a common primitive Semitic belief, the deity was thought to dwell², became in the new national tradition, the receptacle of the two tablets of the Decalog. But in accordance with the dominant Qenite, or Judahite, conception of the deity, Jahwe himself, the national god of Israel, was thereafter never to be represented more by idol or cult-object, was to develop from this point into the incorporeal, spiritual, universal god of the prophets.

But all this anticipates. Of the many tribal gods Jahwe alone do we know positively by name. But the name itself is most significant. Various etymologies have been suggested³. The one most generally accepted is that the name is a *hiphil* form of *hawa*, "to be," and means "he causes to be," or "to exist," in other words, designates Jahwe as the creator of life. And, as said before, just this was the natural Beduin conception of the deity. He was the creator, not of the earth, nor the whole universe, for these are far beyond the limited ken of the desert tribesman, but of life itself, the life of his own children and fellow-tribesmen, of his sheep and cattle, and of the plants and herbage from which these feed. He was thought to dwell upon a sacred mountain far out in the desert, and long after the tribes had fused together into the nation, he was still thought by some to yet dwell there. It was to this mountain that Elijah pilgrimed, when, in despair at the seeming hopelessness of his task, he felt the need of communing directly with Jahwe; and there, in the sacred cave on top of the mountain, he had his vision and heard Jahwe speaking in the still small voice⁴.

But Jahwe was not the only original tribal god thus thought to dwell upon a sacred mountain in the desert. The Bible speaks of several sacred mountains and other spots out in the desert, which must have been originally seats of tribal gods and local tribal sanctuaries. In the later national traditions

¹ Ex. XXVIII, 6-30.

² Cf. Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites*³, 200ff.

³ Cf. Davidson, in Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, II, 199.

⁴ I Ki. XIX, 1-14.

these various sacred mountains, too, were all fused under the names of Sinai or Horeb. But these two, at least, must originally have been absolutely distinct peaks. Num. X, 33, a part of one of the oldest Hexateuchal codes¹, tells that the mountain of God was only a three days' journey from the Promised Land. According to Deut. I, 2, it was an eleven days' journey from Horeb to the Jordan opposite Jericho by way of Mt. Se'ir and Qadesh Barne'a. And according to Deut. XXXIII, 2; Jud. V, 4 and Hab. III, 3, Sinai was a peak in this very range of Mt. Se'ir. Certainly Qadesh, too, in the wilderness south of Judah, must have been originally, as the name implies, a sacred place. From this it can be seen how futile are the usual attempts to determine the exact location of Sinai, and to identify it with any one, single peak in the so-called Sinaitic peninsula.

This idea of the particular dwelling-place of a deity accords fully with the fundamental principles of early Semitic religion, and is amply corroborated by Biblical evidence. Genesis tells repeatedly that the patriarchs erected altars at places where they believed a deity had revealed himself². These altars were erected, not to a general national or universal god, but, as is expressly stated repeatedly, to the particular deity who had appeared in that one single spot, and had thus signified that this was his own peculiar abode. Similarly, when David was driven by Saul to seek refuge among the Philistines, his chief complaint was that, away from his own land, he could no longer worship his own, native god, but must worship the gods of the new land³. And when Na'aman, the Syrian, had been cured by Elisha, and would in gratitude worship the god of Israel, he could do so only by taking with him to Damascus two ass-loads of earth from the land of Israel, whereon, in the foreign land, he might erect a little shrine to the strange god⁴. The god and the land, or more correctly a certain spot of land, were in primitive Semitic religion inseparably associated⁵.

¹ Cf. my *Biblical Theophanies*, in *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* XXVIII (1913), 23f.

² Gen. XII, 7f.; XVI, 13; XXII, 4, 18; XXVI, 25.

³ I Sam. XXVI, 19.

⁴ II Ki. V, 17.

⁵ Cf. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*², 92ff.

Some of the tribes, it is clear, had the tradition that when they migrated from their desert abode, their god, too, forsook his home and marched with them, represented by, or contained in, the tribal cult-object, as for example, the ark of Ephraim. But the Qenite tradition, preserved in Ex. XXXIII and XXXIV, tells positively that Jahwe refused to forsake his holy mountain¹. And long after the Qenites had taken up their semi-permanent residence in the wilderness south of Judah, the conception still prevailed in the minds of some, as the Elijah story shows, that Jahwe still dwelt upon his sacred mountain out in the desert. And thither, at their great, annual festival, the Qenites must have pilgrimed, to properly discharge their religious obligations in the very presence of their tribal god.

This great, annual festival was celebrated in early spring, when the sheep and cattle cast their young. The principle that a man is sole owner of all that he creates seems fundamental in all society. And since Jahwe, together with other tribal gods, was conceived of as the creator of the life of sheep and cattle, he must also have been looked upon as their original owner. All tribal cattle, and for that matter all human beings and all plant growth likewise, were regarded as his creatures, and hence as his peculiar property. That being the case, it followed that the cattle could not be used with impunity by men, were forbidden, taboo, holy, *qadosh*. And yet the Beduin in the desert must live chiefly from his sheep and cattle, or at least from their products of milk and wool. Therefore some way had to be found to set aside the original divine property right and remove the taboo, without, however, angering the deity. This same conception and this same problem exist for most primitive men in the pastoral and agricultural stages of civilization, and the same solution has been given by practically all, viz., the principle, that might well be called the law of the removal of taboo, that the sacrifice of a part, and especially the first and best part, removes the taboo upon the remainder, redeems it, to use the technical term, for common use. The application of this principle to desert life meant that the deity's original property

¹ Cf. my *Biblical Theophanies*, in *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* XXV (1911), 171ff.

right to all cattle could be obviated only by the taboo-sacrifice of the firstlings of the cattle. These had to be given to the deity completely. In the earliest stages of religious evolution, these animals were merely killed at the sacred stone, the forerunner of the later altar, and their blood was smeared upon this, while their carcasses were left on the ground to be eaten by birds and beasts of prey¹. Later, in more advanced civilization, the animal was burned completely upon the altar. And still later, except in special cases, only a portion of the animal, the *'azqarah*² or "symbol," was burned; the remainder became the food of the priests. But always under no condition might the sacrificer himself partake of his own taboo-sacrifice. This very logical prescription distinguished the taboo-sacrifice outwardly from the covenant-sacrifice. In time this taboo-sacrifice developed into the *'olah*, the *minchah*, the *chattath* and the *'asham* of the Priestly Code.

These firstlings seem to have been sacrificed regularly eight days after birth³. And since all sheep and cattle cast their young at almost the same time, these firstlings naturally could, and would; all be sacrificed together, and this occasion would constitute the most important, if not the sole festival of these pastoral tribes. In addition to these firstling sacrifices, the tribesmen participated in the sacred dance, the climax of the celebration, that gave to these festivals their common designation, *chag*, from *chagag*, "to dance," and to this particular festival its special name, *pesach*, from *pasach* also "to dance," apparently with a peculiar step or limping motion⁴. This festival was the forerunner of the later Passover, and these firstling sacrifices, of the later Paschal lamb.

But Jahwe and the other tribal gods were the creators, not only of animals, but of human life as well. Logically, therefore, we would expect that all human firstborn would be likewise offered as taboo-sacrifices. And there is ample evidence that the sacrifice of first-born children did play a prominent

¹ Cf. Wellhausen, *Reste des altarabischen Heidentums*², 116ff.

² Lev. II, 2, 9, 16; V, 12; VI, 8; XXIV, 7; Num. V, 26.

³ Ex. XXII, 29.

⁴ Cf. I Ki. XVIII, 26, and the adjective *pisseach*, "lame."

role in all early Semitic religion¹. Our ancestors, too, originally sacrificed their firstborn children on the eighth day after birth, sure that only thereby could the favor of the deity be gained, and further offspring be ensured.

But as parental love gradually became stronger than fear of the deity, ways and means naturally were found to evade the original awful sacrifice. First-born males were instead often consecrated to lifelong service of the deity, became the first regular priests. Or perhaps a substitute sacrifice was offered, either some fitting animal, generally a lamb², or perhaps, as among the Carthaginians³, a slave. Perhaps, too, after large shrines, with fixed bodies of priests and urgent needs for material upkeep, had arisen, a payment of money was accepted in lieu of the actual sacrifice of the child or of a substitute animal⁴.

Or, finally, since actually all children were taboo, by a different, but equally natural, application of the same principle, that the sacrifice of a part of the tabooed object redeems the remainder, the custom arose of redeeming all males, at least, by sacrificing a part of the child to the deity, a part, naturally, that could be spared without maiming the child too greatly. This same custom exists among many primitive peoples, expressing itself in the ceremonies of knocking out teeth, cutting off the hair, or perhaps removing a joint of one of the fingers or toes. But the part most commonly sacrificed, probably partly because from the very organ whose function the ceremony was intended to further, was the foreskin. This, of course, is the origin of the very wide-spread custom of circumcision, at least as practiced by the Semites.

In time, when the real origin and significance of these various means of evading the actual first-born sacrifice were forgotten, it was not surprising that they should be duplicated, even consciously, that, for example, a people that practiced circumcision should also regularly redeem its first-born by the

¹ Cf. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*², 464, who, however, somewhat misstates the matter.

² Cf. my *Doctrine of Sin in the Babylonian Religion* (*Mitteilungen der vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft*, 1905, 3), pp. 69ff.

³ Diodorus Siculus, XX, 14.

⁴ Num. XVIII, 15f.

additional means of a substitute animal or the payment of redemption money.

Biblical evidence proves conclusively that, at different periods in their religious evolution, our ancestors practiced all these rites of sacrifice and redemption of first-born with the possible exception of the substitution of a slave. In all likelihood, when they entered Canaan they had partially, though by no means completely, outgrown the original sacrifice itself. Circumcision, too, was universally practiced by them, while, to a certain extent at least, the first-born was generally regarded as the natural family and clan, if not tribal, priest. And if not already before entrance into Canaan, then certainly very soon thereafter, the custom arose of substituting a lamb for the child. The oldest Biblical legislation¹ not only permitted, but actually commanded, this substitution, and thereby prohibited all human sacrifice. Such was the general conception, not only of Jahwe, but in a general way, of all original tribal gods, and such were the most important details of their original worship. It may, of course, be objected, that this description fits the god-conception and worship, not only of the Israelite tribes, but of all Semites in the pastoral stage of civilization. This is perfectly true. We know now that, in origin, the religion of Israel differed not one whit from common primitive Semitic religion; that it began as a purely pastoral Semitic cult and continued as such for a long time, during the entire period of desert life, and even during the first years of the sojourn in Palestine. And only through a long and gradual evolution, beginning with the establishment of the kingdom, with its consequent transformation of the life of the people, and the rise of prophecy, did it differentiate itself from other Semitic religions and become unique, the national religion of Israel, and eventually the world's great universal religion, our Judaism.

We must also consider briefly the social side of the pre-Canaan tribal life if we would rightly understand the subsequent national, economic, and religious development of Israel. Out in the desert there is absolutely no supreme authority. Within the clan or tribe every man is entirely the equal of every

¹ Ex. XXXIV, 19f.

one else. To the sheikh the members of the tribe generally resort for counsel, and to him they generally submit their disputes. But there is no power, other than that of common opinion, to compel the acceptance of his advice or decision. In war or upon the march a temporary leader, always a renowned warrior, is elected, who plans and leads in battle, determines the day's march and the halting-place at night. Beyond this, common opinion as to what is fundamentally just is the only powerful, all-compelling factor in regulating tribal social life. It has, however, led to the recognition of certain unwritten laws, chief of which is that of blood-revenge, but at the bottom of all of which, and in fact of all desert social life, lies the principle of fit, measured, and absolutely just compensation or retaliation, the practical expression of the universal principle of stern, uncompromising justice and personal equality¹.

And of this desert life, with its unrestricted liberty and equality, the true nomad is inordinately proud. The farmer, or *fellah*, seems worthy only of his contempt. As a rule, only gradually and with misgiving does he adopt the agricultural or semi-agricultural life, even with its many material advantages of ease and comfort and a fairly stable and varied food supply. With all its hardships and scanty and monotonous fare, the Beduin prefers his desert, with its assurance of complete personal liberty. Slavery, strictly-speaking, is practically unknown in the desert. Real, individual poverty, too, but rarely exists, for each individual or family has undisputed claim upon the rest of the clan or tribe for help or maintenance in need. Sexual morality, too, is upon a very high plane. Adultery and unchastity are almost unknown, and are punished by the severest penalties, generally death². This is all the more striking, when contrasted with the standards and practices of sexual morality that obtained, for perfectly comprehensible reasons, among the agricultural Semites, as, for example, the Canaanites³. Parental and filial relations, too, are most carefully cherished in the desert. The father or grandfather, unless incapacitated by age, exercises supreme authority within the family or clan,

¹ Cf. Blunt, *Beduins of the Euphrates*, 392ff.; 408ff.

² *Op. cit.* 405ff.

³ Cf. below, p. 281.

and is accorded unquestioning and punctilious obedience and reverence by all members, even though fully advanced to man's estate.

This pride in the life and virtues and unrestricted liberty and equality of the desert, this sense of sexual morality, parental and filial respect and affection, and of absolute justice and community of interest, characterize the Beduin for all time. We can trace these influences in Israelite life; surviving the far-reaching transformation from the pastoral, nomad existence of the desert to the agricultural life in Canaan; constituting, when coupled with the conception of the national god of Israel, who demands and delights in moral and ethical conduct, some of the most fundamental principles of prophetic religion and prophetic ethics, particularly in opposition to the altogether different and vastly lower ethical standards and practices of Canaanite and foreign religions, against which the prophets had constantly to combat; in consequence becoming conscious and fundamental principles of Judaism and Jewish ethics, and therefore surviving in us down to the present day, and throughout all these ages exerting a potent influence upon the evolution of our religion, and our religious and social psychology. The incidents of Uriah¹ and Naboth²; the purity of family life, and the intensity of parental and filial love and sense of duty; the inherent antipathy to, and practical restriction of slavery; the stern insistence upon absolute social justice, and the conception of the God of Israel as primarily a god of justice; the rise of prophecy in Israel, and its earnest, spontaneous championship of the poor and oppressed; the constant and uncompromising passion for freedom, liberty and equality, and impatience of all undemocratic government; all these principles that have ever distinguished Israel from all other peoples, and Judaism from all other religions, that have ever been present in our ancestors, and are imperatively present in us today, these principles of eternal truth and right and righteousness, are all, indirectly at least, largely the product of the desert life and origins of our ancestors. And Judaism can be rightly understood only when we have traced the life and history of our ancestors back, and

¹ I Sam. XI-XII.

² I Ki. XXI.

in as great detail as possible, to their beginnings in the vast, mysterious desert of the East. Origins are by no means all of history; but they are an important part thereof, absolutely essential to full comprehension, and dare not be disregarded by the conscientious seeker after truth and knowledge.

V

ISRAEL IN CANAAN

In contrast to their original desert home, Canaan must have seemed to the Israelite tribes indeed a "land flowing with milk and honey." Yet, like every other land, the topography and the corresponding productivity of the different parts vary considerably. The northern and central portions, Galilee and Samaria, and particularly the valley of Jezreel, the low-lying hills of Ephraim and Manasseh, and the Mediterranean coast-land, are very fertile. The tribes that settled here must almost immediately have given up their pastoral life for the easier existence of the farmer. But this necessitated a complete transformation of beliefs and habits. Residence in fixed and permanent abodes and the assurance of a stable and varied food-supply make powerfully for advance in civilization. And inasmuch as these tribes did not enter peacefully into an uninhabited land, since they had to conquer and dispossess the earlier inhabitants, who had, necessarily, already attained to this higher civilization, it follows that the agricultural tribes did not develop this civilization spontaneously and slowly, but borrowed it in its entirety from the Canaanites.

On the other hand the southern portion of Palestine, Judah, is comparatively rocky and sterile. The water supply is scanty, the mountains steep and rugged, and the soil, except in a few favored spots, greatly washed away by the heavy rains. To the south the country gradually merges into the desert. And the country east of the Jordan, although far more fertile and capable of cultivation, is still quite rugged, while proximity to the desert on the east lays the land constantly open to forays by marauding Beduin bands. In consequence the southern and eastern portions of Palestine have never been extensively cultivated.

Accordingly, the tribes that settled here continued to live as shepherds and cattle-raisers, and the old desert life and religious beliefs and practices continued, but little modified from their original form. The old desert Jahwe was still worshipped by the Qenites, and long after the national Jahwe was commonly believed to have taken up permanent residence in the Temple at Jerusalem, Elijah, the shepherd from east of the Jordan, the uncompromising champion of the old, desert, pastoral ideas and ideals of life and worship, still pilgrimed to the desert peak, where, as he persisted in believing, Jahwe still had his own particular abode.

However, the southern and eastern portions of the land could support only a comparatively limited population. Only a few of the tribes, and these apparently the smallest and weakest, settled here. The central and northern portions were the most attractive, and thither the larger tribes naturally forced their way. Their first great problem was to learn how to till the soil. Their only teachers could be the Canaanites, alongside of whom, in the more mountainous portions of the country, they speedily settled, after the first hostility of invasion had subsided. "What must we do to farm successfully?" they asked, and the Canaanites replied, "You must plow and sow and reap." "And is that all?" "No," was the answer, "if you would live in this land and be successful farmers, you must, of course, worship the gods to whom the land belongs, and who bestow its agricultural blessings." This was an irrefutable argument. Had the tribes objected, "We can never worship those gods; we already have our own ancestral, tribal gods," the Canaanites might have logically replied, "But they are all desert gods, who only create numerous sheep and cattle out in the desert. If we went to live there, we would worship them too. But here you must worship the gods of this land, and, of course, with their own peculiar rites with which we have always worshipped them. You may continue to worship your old tribal gods too, if you wish, but our gods, at least, you must worship." And it was absolutely true. Being farmers now, and in the land of these gods, the agricultural tribes had to have an agricultural religion, had to adopt completely the ritual of the gods of the land. They

could do nothing else. What were these gods, and how were they worshipped?

In agricultural life the imperative need is, of course, an abundant crop. A purely agricultural people raises only enough to satisfy its needs for the one year. If, for any reason, the crop fails, famine follows. All the rites of agricultural religion will therefore tend to compel the deities to so function that the annual crop will prove all-sufficient.

The primary factors in agricultural life may be reduced to three, first the soil, or the earth itself, conceived as the great mother, from whose capacious womb all life springs; second, the heaven above, the source of both rain and sunlight, so indispensable for plant life, that the heaven is generally conceived as the great father, and both rain and sun's rays are often represented as the fecundating principle, descending from Father Heaven, fertilizing Mother Earth¹, and making her bring forth the annual crop, the third factor in agricultural life, naturally conceived as the child of the great parent pair, and forming with them a true, indissoluble trinity. This conception of Mother Earth, and with it, implied at least, of Father Heaven, and of the crop, their Divine Child, is found among many, if not most, primitive, agricultural peoples. It seems to have been common to all Semitic agricultural peoples, although, of course, with many local variations².

Among the Canaanites Mother Earth was deified under the name of *Astart* or *Astarte*, identical with the Babylonian *Ishtar*. Father Heaven received the name, or, perhaps better, the title, *Ba'al*, "Lord" or "Husband," and the crop, the Divine Child, in a way a deity of rather passive function and subordinate rank, was called by the general name or title, *'Adon*, "Lord," the Greek Adonis, the parallel of the Babylonian Tammuz. And since the crop goes through an ever-recurring, annual cycle of sprouting, growth, ripening, harvesting and sowing,

¹ Cf. Dieterich, *Mutter Erde*, 15 note 2; 42ff.; 92-100; Frazer, *The Golden Bough*³, II, *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, II, 98ff., and the saying ascribed to R. Jehudah, *mitra' ba'ala' de 'ar'a' hu'*, "the rain is the husband of the earth" (*Bab. Ta'anith* 6b).

² Cf. Nöldeke, *Mutter Erde und Verwandtes bei den Semiten*, in *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, VIII (1905), 161-167.

the well-known myth early arose of the beautiful youth, Adonis, born in the spring, growing to ripe and flowering manhood, then suddenly cut down and buried in the earth, only, however, to rise again to new life the following spring, and thus, from year to year, going through this same cycle of birth, death and resurrection¹. And since each year it was in a way the old, and yet, in fact, a new, Adonis that was born, the belief arose, that Adonis was always the first-born and only-begotten child of Mother Earth, Astarte or Ishtar, who in turn was, therefore, always a virgin until the birth of Adonis, and who, therefore, constantly after each birth must have either renewed her virginity or remained a virgin in spite of this birth, and thus was the eternally virgin-goddess, even while at the same time the great Mother and goddess of sexual love. And since, too, the new crop, the new Adonis, sprang from the seed of the old crop, the old Adonis, sown in the womb of Mother Earth, Adonis came in time, in certain local forms of the great myth, to be regarded, no longer as the child, but as the lover and consort of Astarte or Ishtar, and was therefore occasionally confused with Ba'al, the Father God himself.

It must, however, not be imagined that there was one great trinity for the entire land, for there was no one single Canaanite nation. The land was divided into many, small, independent city-states, each with its local Ba'al, Astarte and Adonis, just as each desert tribe had its own tribal god; and within each city-state there was at least one local shrine consecrated to the worship of its particular trinity. But just as with the pastoral tribes, so, too, the same conception lay at the bottom of the various local trinities, and all were worshipped in much the same manner. Hence, in a general sense, we may speak of Ba'al and Astarte and Adonis as the sum total of the common, characteristic features of the many local *B^e'alim*, *Ashtaroth* and *'Adonim*.

In a fertile land with fairly certain annual crops and numerous, conveniently situated shrines, the ritual must necessarily be far more elaborate than that of the simple, pastoral

¹ Cf. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*³, V, *Adonis, Attis and Osiris*³; Baudissin, *Adonis und Esmun*; Vellay, *Le culte et les fêtes d'Adônis-Thammouz dans l'Orient antique*.

religion. The chief festivals would naturally fall at the critical periods of the agricultural year, in spring and fall. The first of these was the great, seven-day *mazzoth*-festival, at which the last grain of the old crop was eaten sacramentally, in the form of *mazzoth*, or unleavened bread, in order that none of the old crop, the old Adonis, might remain, when the new crop, the new Adonis, should be cut. Whatever of the old crop could not be eaten thus, had to be burned¹. Then on the day following the close of this festival, when the old crop had been completely consumed, the people would repair to the fields and solemnly cut the first sheaf of barley, the first grain to ripen, and with this march in solemn procession to their local shrine and offer it up as the taboo-sacrifice of the barley, which thereafter they were free to eat.

But the same taboo extended over the successively ripening grains, the rye, oats and wheat. Before each could be used for profane purposes, the taboo had to be removed by the sacrifice of the first-fruits. Yet the harvest-time is too short, and every day too important, to permit of appropriate rites at the sacrifice of the first-fruits of each new kind of grain, particularly if every seventh day was a rest-day, a Sabbath, upon which all work was taboo². Accordingly each first sheaf was put aside, to be sacrificed later at the close of the entire grain-harvest. By thus symbolizing the actual taboo-sacrifice, the people felt free to eat at once of each new grain. And finally, at the end of approximately seven weeks, the usual duration of the grain-harvest, these various first sheaves were brought to the local sanctuaries with solemn procession, and the joyful festival of the first-fruits was celebrated.

And then, at the close of the entire agricultural year, when the grain had been threshed and stored away, the fruit and olives gathered, and the wine and oil pressed out, just before the beginning of the rainy season, the festival of ingathering, most important of all, the *chag* par excellence, was celebrated for seven days. And on the following day, the eighth, the new

¹ Cf. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*³, VII, *The Spirits of the Corn and the Wild*, II, 72ff.

² Ex. XXXIV, 21.

year was ushered in with appropriate rites and ceremonies of purification and rejoicing.

But these festivals were far less occasions for the sacrifice of first-fruits, than for the celebration of important rites by the whole people. No sooner was the old crop harvested than the people began to look forward with anxious hope to the next crop. Or to express this in religious language, Adonis was dead; would he be restored to life, that the people too might live? Much of the ritual of these great festivals centered about the thought of the death and longed-for resurrection of Adonis. The festivals began with a period of fasting, mourning and bewailing the dead god, which gradually changed to a condition of joy, ecstasy and frenzy at the thought of his resurrection, culminating in wild dances of the maidens in the vineyards on the last day or night of the festival¹. There were also various so-called homeopathic, magical ceremonies, ritual acts, observed by practically all primitive peoples, which rest upon the premise that like always causes like, that a desired event in nature can be brought about by simulating it in solemn and detailed ritual². Thus in time of drought the sprinkling of water from aloft, say by some one perched on a high tree, resembles the falling of the rain from heaven. And the belief was world-wide, that the proper performance of some such ceremony would invariably cause the rain to fall. Ceremonies like this were common among the Canaanites. Best known perhaps was that of the gardens of Adonis³. Quickly ripening plants were sown in richly fertilized soil in flower-pots, just before the beginning of these festivals, were well watered and kept in the rays of the sun, so that they sprouted rapidly during the first days of the festival, only, however to wither equally rapidly. The sprouting of the plants resembled, and was thought to actually compel, the sprouting of the grain, the rebirth or resurrection of the dead Adonis. References to this ceremony, as known to, and undoubtedly practiced in ancient Israel, are found in the Bible⁴.

¹ Cf. Judges XXI, 17-23; *Mishnah Ta'anith* IV, 8.

² Cf. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*³, I, *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, I, 55ff.

³ Cf. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*³, V, *Adonis, Attis and Osiris*³, I, 194ff.

⁴ Is. XVII, 10f. (cf. Duhm to the passage), and possibly I, 29.

But since Adonis was regarded as the only-begotten child of Ba'al and Astarte, the offspring of their marriage union, the most natural homeopathic, magical ceremony would be to simulate this union in actual ritual. Among the Babylonians, at the great annual new year festival, the marriage of the gods was appropriately celebrated¹. Among the Canaanites, the emphasis seems to have been laid rather upon the act of sexual union. The dances of the maidens in the vineyards were merely preliminary to their being seized and carried off by the young men of the village. Yet this was, in origin at least, no mere unbridled lust, but a religious rite, that touched upon the fundamental problem of the maintenance of life. And the ceremony, too, seems to have constituted originally the essential, if not the sole, marriage rite. The stories of the Benjaminites and the maidens of Shiloh², and of the dances of the maidens of Jerusalem in the vineyards on the 15th of Ab and Yom Kippur³ record late survivals of the original homeopathic, magical ceremony.

But in time, in practically all Semitic agricultural religions, this ceremony of sacred prostitution came to be performed by specific classes of priests and priestesses, the *qedeshim* and *qedeshoth*⁴. It was a peculiar ceremony indeed, and necessarily led to ever-increasing licentiousness. It was outwardly probably the most characteristic Canaanite rite, and distinguished Canaanite religion most pointedly, externally at least, from the simple, pastoral religion of the desert tribes, with their high standard of sexual morality. We can, therefore, appreciate the scathing denunciations by the prophets of this rite, and with it of all the many Canaanite elements, that now began to enter into the religion of Israel⁵.

For, as we have seen, almost immediately after entrance into Canaan, the agricultural tribes in the center and north of necessity adopted the worship of Ba'al and Astarte and Adonis,

¹ Cf. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*³, II, *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, II, 25 and note, 130.

² Jud. XXI, 17-23.

³ *Mishnah Ta'anith*, IV, 8.

⁴ Cf. Movers, *Die Phönizier*, I, 678ff.

⁵ In particular Hosea, Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

and began to frequent the many local shrines and participate in all the festivals and rites on equal terms with the Canaanites. Not that the worship of the tribal gods was immediately discarded. As long as tribal distinctions continued to obtain, the survival of the old desert conditions, that long, too, the old tribal gods had to survive. And to a certain extent too, we can notice a gradual fusion of the old, pastoral religion with the new agricultural religion. Typical of this is the Biblical Passover, the outgrowth of the grafting of the old, pastoral *pesach* upon the agricultural *mazzoth*-festival¹. The fact that these two festivals came at practically the same moment of the year made this fusion inevitable.

But in all this process, the new agricultural religion had to dominate. It was the more complex, elaborate and attractive; it was the religion of the shrines and the land; and, above all, it alone was the direct outgrowth of the daily life, and satisfied the fundamental needs, of the now agricultural people. The desert life and the shepherd religion were completely outgrown. The old tribal gods were daily becoming, more and more, half-forgotten names and empty symbols of original tribal distinctions; and they and their worship threatened to disappear completely before the steadily increasing worship of Ba'al and Astarte and Adonis.

Such now became the religion and religious practices of the agricultural tribes in the central and northern portions of the land. In the south and east, however, as we have seen, the old, desert, shepherd life and religion continued with but little modification. And this fact alone constituted an ever-widening breach between the two groups of agricultural and pastoral tribes. But not only in religion did this breach speedily spring up. The life of the farmer differs in every way from that of the shepherd. The farmer occupies a fixed abode, has a fixed place of worship, lives in intimate communion with fellow-men. All this makes for comparatively rapid social and cultural progress. The shepherd, on the contrary, stands practically still culturally. Day by day this disparity in civilization and culture increased, and very quickly the agricultural tribes

¹ Cf. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels*⁶, 84f.

came to look down upon the pastoral tribes as inferiors, deserving only of pity and contempt. Moreover the pastoral tribes were almost completely cut off from their wealthier and more cultured, agricultural neighbors. The Jordan river and valley are not easily crossed, except in very few places. And along the northern border of Judah, the northernmost limit of the pastoral tribes in the south, an extensive stretch of land, from Jerusalem on the east to Gezer on the west, remained Canaanite territory until the time of David. All highroads from the south to the north passed either through Jerusalem or the Canaanite country to the west. Free communication between south and north was therefore impossible. David's first act as king over United Israel was the capture of Jerusalem¹, just to ensure a united kingdom in fact as well as in name.

This breach between the agricultural and pastoral tribes was many-sided and unbridgeable. They stood too far apart religiously, economically and socially. The feeling of superiority and contempt of the agricultural tribes was matched by a corresponding feeling of resentment and distrust among the pastoral tribes. Complete and permanent fusion of the two groups was impossible. David did, in the face of the great common Philistine danger, effect a certain union; and he and Solomon by virtue of their strong personalities and constant watchfulness and preparedness, could, although with difficulty and despite numerous attempts at revolution, hold the two peoples together. The moment the weakling, Rehobē'am, came to the throne, the nation dissolved into the northern and southern kingdoms, the old natural divisions of agricultural and pastoral tribes. The eastern pastoral tribes, cut off altogether from the south, had perforce to attach themselves, though rather loosely, to the northern kingdom.

And in religion, too, the breach was incurable. The northern tribes had to have an agricultural religion, regardless of whither this might tend. But to the pastoral tribes this could seem only disloyalty to the old, ancestral gods and traditions. Almost coincident with the settlement of the tribes in the land, the conflict began between the old, pastoral, and the new, agricultural

¹ II Sam. V, 6-9.

religions, the old Jahwe, and the new Ba'al worship. The latter flourished in the center and north. The pastoral tribes, particularly in the south, continued ever the stronghold of the old religion and the old shepherd ideas and ideals of life and virtue. It can now be easily understood, why the first great prophets, outwardly the champions of the old order, both religious and social, sprang from out the shepherd tribes, Elijah from east of the Jordan, Amos from Tekoah in Judah, the Rechabites from the same environment. This combat between Jahwe worship and Ba'al worship, that began now and continued in one form or other until the Babylonian exile, furnishes the key to the religious history of Israel. Judaism is not the mere continuation of a triumphant desert religion. This could not triumph; it had to succumb, because the desert life had to be outgrown. But it was out of this conflict that Judaism, the universal religion, at last was born. And we can understand the history of Judaism correctly only by knowing and rightly appreciating these two great forces and all the details of the struggle.

VI

CONCLUSION

Here we must pause. Our subject might have been treated with far greater detail and elaboration of evidence, had time permitted. But enough has been said to clearly present, even though, of necessity, in brief and summary manner, a modern, scientific interpretation of the beginning of Israel's history from a positive and constructive Jewish standpoint. It is, in a sense, a two-fold history. It involves, first, the detailed and systematic investigation of Israel's national, social, and economic evolution, from its origin in a heterogeneous group of previously unrelated, desert tribes, forcing their way, one by one, into a new and attractive land, settling down, for the most part, to agricultural life, only slowly gaining complete control of the country in the face of Canaanite and Philistine opposition; but just because of this long and desperate struggle for existence, developing a sense of community of interest, relationship and federation, which culminated in the establishment of

the united kingdom. This, however, was an abnormal condition, and could be only temporary. Thereafter we can follow the fortunes of the two separate kingdoms politically and economically, noting the gradual transformation induced by the attainment of the commercial stage of civilization, can see the attendant festering, polluting, foreign influences at work, until at last both northern and southern kingdoms succumb, less to conquest by powerful foreign nations, than to internal, political and economic stagnation and decay.

And in the second place, ours is a study of Israel's religious evolution. Not that this can be separated from its political, economic and social life, for all go hand in hand, constantly react upon each other, and are incomprehensible, the one without the other. Yet we can isolate the religious evolution to a certain extent and follow it out by itself. We can trace this evolution from its origin in primitive, pastoral, tribal religion, with its different tribal gods and simple, pastoral ritual; we can see this pastoral religion coming in contact with the agricultural, Canaanite religion, and their great, centuries-long, life and death struggle immediately beginning. We can follow out the successive steps by which the original tribal gods fused into one national god, and Jahwe, originally god of only one small tribe and lord of a single, desert, mountain peak, came at last to be regarded as supreme lord of the entire land and nation, with earthly residence in the Temple at Jerusalem, yet gradually conceived of as too spiritual and transcendental for earthly abode and earthly limitations and attributes. We can trace, too, step by step, the rise and growth, during this and the succeeding periods of its history, of the many characteristic and unique institutions of Israel, of the national consciousness, national traditions and literature; of the national, civil and religious law; of prophecy, with its rapidly expanding message; we can see the struggle between Ba'al and Jahwe worship becoming concrete and acute, largely under, and in opposition to, foreign influence, in the days from Elijah to the Babylonian exile; the gradual ascendancy of the priesthood over the prophets during and after the exile; the unique, at first only half-comprehended, conception of Jahwe, as no longer merely a national

God, but now the universal God of all mankind, and Israel the messenger of His truth to all the world. We can perceive momentary revivals of a decadent, and somewhat speculative and predictive prophetism in apocalyptic literature, while, on the other hand, priestly power and priestly law and theology continue to develop, until at last, immediately upon the close of the Pentateuchal canon, the evolution of the oral law begins. Here commences the task of the post-Biblical historian.

All this, however, merely foreshadows the possibilities of presentation, from the standpoint of Biblical Science, of the history of Israel during the entire Biblical period. It is a large subject, and can, in consequence, only be anticipated in this paper. It is impossible to give here more than the merest outline of the leading forces and tendencies in the evolution of Israel in the earliest, formative period of its history, antedating the establishment of the kingdom. And in this entire period, it must be borne in mind, Israel was no more than a gradually federating group of typically Semitic tribes. Only in the period following the establishment of the kingdom, when, to combat the increasing and corrupting, foreign influences, prophecy arose, with its distinct and peculiar message, did all that was significant and unique in Israel's history and in Israel's contribution to human knowledge, religion and civilization, begin to manifest itself. This paper could, of course, no more than merely hint at this later evolution, and outline the earliest causes that tended to bring it about. As the title indicates, the paper aims merely to establish, as clearly as limited time and space will permit, the foundations, or better, some of the foundations, ethnic, political, psychological and spiritual, upon which the later historical evolution rested, and the point from which this evolution proceeded. The continuation of the work must follow at some other time and place. But from this presentation of the foundations, the able and sympathetic student may anticipate somewhat the subsequent course of evolution of Israel's real history.

It is an interesting and altogether constructive study. It may lead far from the beaten course of the traditional interpretation of Jewish history, into untrodden fields, new and strange,

and to some, perhaps, ominous of evil. But we need have no fear. Day by day this sober, positive, constructive attitude toward our Jewish history is gaining ground. And the time must come when the history of our religion will be thus understood by all our thinking men and women. They will have full and reverent appreciation of our ancient traditions too, for these illustrate and interpret our history, were, in fact, so written by the early prophetic writers of the Torah and the historical books; they breathe the eternal spirit of our Judaism, and are a priceless part of our sacred, spiritual heritage. But men will know full well how to distinguish between, and correctly evaluate, the merely traditional and the historically true, will know how Judaism came to be and the whole course of its subsequent history; and knowing all this, they will know what Judaism is, and will revere and practice it intelligently and with conviction and passion. Truth and knowledge can not be destructive of any religion nor of genuine faith; they must be the touchstones that separate the real and the eternal from the false and evanescent; they alone can be the firm foundation, upon which may rest the living, universal religion, which we hope and believe and labor that our Judaism may be.

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